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MODERN OXFORD: THE GIRL UNDERGRADUATE *Oxford Mail*

MODERN ENGLAND

AS SEEN BY AN ENGLISHWOMAN

By
CICELY HAMILTON

WITH 20 PAGES OF
PHOTOGRAPHS

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FOREWORD

TO write of England, being English, is to grope for the wood amongst the trees; one stands too near to get it in the right perspective. An Englishman who was blessed (or cursed) with the international mind might attain to the needful detachment of outlook and see his England steadily and whole, as if it were Norway, Japan, or Guatemala; but that power of detachment is not given to me—my outlook, I believe, is essentially English, nor do I wish it to be otherwise. That being so, the English race, to which I belong, has a power, given to no other people, to kindle my affection and also to rouse my annoyance—we quarrel most readily with those who are near and dear to us. When I land on Dover Pier, it is always with a stirring of the heart; I am back in my own place, with my own people, who understand not only the tongue I speak but my English habit of thought. I know I share many of their faults, I hope I share some of their virtues; from whatever angle I look at them, they are more to me than the rest of the world and I cannot regard them impartially.

In a speech he made some years ago—a speech that has often been quoted—Lord Baldwin spoke of what England meant to him. ‘To me,’ he said, ‘England is the country and the country is England’; and he described the characteristic sights and sounds of England as ‘the tinkle of the hammer on the anvil in the country smithy, the corncrake on a dewy morning, the sound of the scythe against the

whetstone, and the sight of a plough team coming over the brow of a hill, the sight that has been seen in England since England was a land, and may be seen in England long after the Empire has perished and every works in England has ceased to function, for centuries the one eternal sight of England. The wild anemones in the woods in April, the last load at night of hay being drawn down a lane as the twilight comes on, when you can scarcely distinguish the figures of the horses as they take it home to the farm, and above all, most subtle, most penetrating, and most moving, the smell of wood smoke coming up in an autumn evening. . . . These are the things that make England.'

Make England for some of us; but not for all, not for most. They are not—as Lord Baldwin went on to point out—the childish inheritance of the majority of our people who to-day are bred to the street; their childish inheritance is tram, tube, and motor-bus, not the plough team breasting the hill. That speech, moreover, was delivered in 1924, and in the years that have elapsed since 1924 the sound of hammer on anvil and scythe on whetstone may have become less familiar even to the countryman; agriculture also is suffering its mechanical changes—all the more swiftly because labour in the field is not popular with youth, and the town, as ever, beckons it away from the countryside. The Baldwin England is not that of industrial Yorkshire and Lancashire or of London's swarming millions; who, judging by their manner of spending holidays, would soon be oppressed by its quiet. No need to pity them if they have what suits them best; if for them 'England is the town and the town is England.' To each man according to his taste!

Not that village England of to-day is what the townsman often imagines it, a backwater stagnating in dullness; the motor-bus has linked it with the outside world, as represented by the nearby towns, their shops, their 'pictures,' and their dance-halls. Dancing, nowadays, is a general accomplishment, confined to no district or class; even the 'Special Areas' have their regular three-penny and sixpenny dances and the village can jazz it with the best. And few, I imagine, have deserved more gratitude from their fellow-creatures than the promoters of Women's Institutes; which have brought interest and pleasure to a class that badly needed them—the hard-working women of the countryside; and which, moreover, have saved alive old inherited handicrafts and local arts of needlework which, without encouragement, would soon have passed and been forgotten. . . . But even though modernity is stirring in the village, the real modern England is essentially urban, living by the office, the factory, the shop. Liverpool Street of a morning, when the suburban torrent pours out of the trains, sweeps through the station, and spreads about the City; a tide of humanity, vast and indistinguishable, which with evening will again gather volume and flow to its dormitory suburbs! That is one aspect of England and a typical aspect; more so to-day than the hay-cart drawn down the lane in twilight or the autumn scent of wood smoke.

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This book, I realize, has been put together in somewhat haphazard fashion because, though my aim was the modern and significant in English life, I have often relied

on chance to point it out. The earnest young Communist who assured me that nothing was being done for the unemployed except to allow them an inadequate dole—that young man started me out on the road that led to the Order of Friends and its farms round Wigan, and on to Land Settlement in Cambridgeshire. A woman who ought to have known better stated at a meeting at which I was present that our English municipal housing schemes had been of benefit only to the middle class—that little or nothing had been done for the really poor and the slum-dweller. That statement, from my own experience, I knew to be incorrect—in fact, I got up and said so when the speaker had finished her address—but all the same it sent me to various municipal estates and housing schemes; one of them at Liverpool, where I made a round of tenement buildings and garden suburbs that can vie, alike as to plan and construction, with any of the recent achievements of the Continent—and to which I have tried to do justice. I needed no guidance to send me to some of the areas known as ‘Special.’ (Why ‘Special,’ I wonder, not ‘Distressed’—which would have some meaning?) The desolate districts of Durham and Cumberland, districts of closed mines and idle villages whence the younger generation migrates to the industries that are growing up in the south. In those regions of dead industry where men of middle age cannot hope for re-employment and the younger generation has to seek it elsewhere, the clamour for more babies, lest the population fall, did not strike one as appropriate to the situation, and I sat down to write my first chapter. So the book grew, one idea suggesting another, without geographical plan. The ceaseless and dangerous expansion of London;

the reckless desecration of the countryside by holiday-maker and bungalow-builder and the general indifference of our people to ugly surroundings—all these are significant of life and thought and habit in England of to-day. And significant also the growing understanding of the English people of the fact that Progress has robbed them of their island treasure of security. For military purposes we have ceased to be an island and must adapt ourselves to the change.

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In the last twenty years—the post-War years—there have been two main currents of crowd-emotion in Europe: the international current and the national. At first the drift was strongly towards internationalism; inevitably so because the peoples of Europe, for four years and over, had suffered and slaughtered in the name of their respective nations. Hence it was natural enough that, in the reaction against suffering and slaughter, it should be assumed that nationality was the sole cause of war and that, if the barriers between them were cast down, the peoples of the world would live in peace and amity. With time and experience came a certain amount of disillusion; it was realized that internationalism—which entails the minding of other people's business—has also its causes of quarrel, since men will fight for ideologies as fiercely as for national flags. And with disillusion, nationalism began to revive, and sometimes to revive with violence.

So far England herself has hardly been stirred by the wave of nationalism passing over Europe; but the same cannot be said of other parts of the United Kingdom.

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Southern Ireland, though she dare not, in her own interest, proclaim a republic and complete independence, has all but cut herself adrift from the British Empire. Scotland also has her Nationalist Party, which would seem to be growing in strength—the demand varying from extended local government to complete Home Rule; while recently a somewhat astonished England has become aware of a nationalist movement in Wales.

Nationalism, like any other ‘-ism,’ can be carried to extremes, but there is nothing unhealthy in the desire of a people to preserve its racial identity and rule itself in accordance with its own tradition. And in an island containing between forty and fifty million inhabitants, Home Rule for Scotland and Home Rule for Wales would at least mean the blessing of decentralization. At any rate, whether we like it or not, the rising nationalism of the ‘Celtic fringe’ is a factor we English, in the next few years, may have to take into account. There is one useful, if humble, purpose that England serves for the British Isles in general; she acts as a species of scapegoat. Whenever anything goes wrong in Scotland, Wales, or Ireland, the blame can always be laid on the senior partner, who accepts it, as a rule, without remonstrance—and not only blame for what happens in the present but for all that has gone wrong in the past. The Celt has a long historical memory, the Anglo-Saxon an exceedingly short one; hence in Scotland and Ireland, where the Celtic strain is strong, the sins of past Englishmen against Scotland or Ireland will often be remembered and cherished as a grievance; whereas the sins of past Irishmen and Scots against England rouse no sense of grievance in the Englishman. Usually we know

nothing about them; and if we do—they happened long ago and, whatever they may mean to the Scot or the Irishman, to us are no more than a leaf from a history book!

Sometimes this indifferent acquiescence of the senior partner in the claims and views of the rest of the kingdom is carried too far—a stand should be made now and then. We ought, for instance, to resent the attempt to suppress our English nationality and name, and force us to disguise ourselves as Britons. In the last few years the words English and Englishman have almost disappeared from the Press; if one had only the Press to go on, one might think the race had been exterminated. No satisfactory substitute has yet been found for the word England—since Britain presumably includes the whole island—so it frequently makes an awkward appearance as ‘this country’! (The former name of ‘this country’ is still in use but chiefly as an adjective connected with sport; for some strange reason it is an England team, not an English, that wins or loses ‘the Ashes.’) This abandonment of our ancient name and title in favour of British is understood to be in deference to the wishes of the Scots; but the Scots are strongly—and rightly—resentful of any attempt to suppress or ignore their own identity, and though they expect us to describe ourselves as British on every occasion, their habit is to insist on their separate Scottishness. They might, I think, be asked to consider that we who live south of the Border also have a history, a tradition, and a national character; an English history, tradition, and character which is something apart from the composite British tradition that we share with them. All other citizens of our Commonwealth of Nations are

not only permitted but expected to indicate their native country by their name—they are Australians, Canadians, Irishmen, South Africans, New Zealanders—so why should we who hail from England be denied the right that is freely exercised by the rest of the British Empire?

The answer to that question is simply, We should not be denied it; England has been England for hundreds of years and for hundreds of years her children have been English. They have made their blunders and committed their sins but they have also achievements to their credit. The day may come when all peoples, nations, and languages will be absorbed in one amorphous world-state; but until that day—and may it be far off!—let us hold to our English identity.

I. THE DISAPPEARING ENGLISHMAN?

As in every other region of the world we call civilized, our English birth-rate, for many years past, has been on the downward trend; having dropped from thirty-five per thousand in the eighteen-seventies to something over fourteen per thousand. At the moment of writing (1937) England is enjoying a welcome measure of prosperity; but even now, with trade on the mend and in many districts booming, our unemployment figures are not altogether satisfactory, and, according to the reckoning of Sir William Beveridge, we must count on an irreducible minimum of worklessness of from six to eight per cent of our industrial population. That being so, there would seem to be no cause for anxiety in the fact that the rate of our increase has slowed down.¹ But despite the unemployment that is always with us and the increasing efficiency of the machine that supplants the man; despite the costly, insanitary evil of overcrowding, the spread of cities, and

¹ 'The total of unemployed in August (1937) amounted to 1,358,621. This figure is the lowest since 1930. It is, on the other hand, substantially above the figures for 1927, 1928, and 1929. These figures are better than they seem because of the increase in the population, but worse because of the emergency nature of the employment on rearmament. To-day's "boom" finds us worse off in the matter of employment than in any of the previous "boom" years in our history.' —*Observer*, September 12, 1937.

destruction of the countryside; there has of late been raised by professors and others a cry of alarm concerning the drop in our birth-rate. We are warned of a future, a few years ahead, when the English race will have ceased to reproduce its numbers and not only our birth-rate but our actual population will be on the downward road.

It is possible—more than possible—that the agitated prophets are correct and that (unless we maintain our numbers by a flow of immigration from needier races) we shall, before many decades are past, have fewer millions inhabiting the island whereof England is the major portion. But since we, with our 685 persons to the square mile, are more closely packed than any other nation in Europe, with the one exception of Belgium, it is permissible to wonder why the thought of a somewhat looser packing should occasion such alarm amongst the prophets, why a little more space per Englishman should appear in the light of a misfortune. Would it be a major disaster if we dropped, say, to Germany's level of 366 per square mile? Or if we had as much room to move about as the Frenchman, the Dane, or the Dutchman?

There are two main reasons for which nations and those who govern them are wont to deprecate a decline in their numbers, and those reasons are: (*a*) the provision of cannon fodder and (*b*) the provision of cheap labour. As regards the latter reason, we have passed the day when the flesh and blood that we know as Labour was looked on merely as a living commodity, to be bought and sold in the market, without restriction on its price; not even the most stubborn believer in freedom of trade would

suggest to-day that we should breed for the sake of an overplus of labour which would cheapen the wage of labour in general and so cheapen the price of our goods. While, looking to the future, who shall prophesy the limits, in years to come, of mechanical invention and development? Who shall say how far the machine will enable us to dispense in our processes of manufacture with the co-operation of humanity? Already, in many departments of life, it does all the real work and we merely assist it and feed it—while year by year it is becoming less subservient, more masterly; year by year it is ousting the work of our brains as well as the work of our hands. A device that adds columns of figures thrusts the clerk from his stool, an engine of new and labour-saving type loses a mechanic his job—and how many orchestras have been turned into the street by ‘canned music’? A few months ago, in the North of England, I was shown round a well-known chemical works; and, in the course of inspection, there was pointed out to me a machine that had been recently invented. It dealt with one of the products of naphtha, the moth-ball familiar to the housewife, and its function was the shaping of the balls. It was a small machine, needing little skill for its manipulation, and therefore worked by boy-labour—that is to say, inexpensively. Three of these devices had been installed in the factory, giving work and wages to three boys; before their installation the moth-balls were rolled into shape by hand, and from fifty to sixty girls were usually employed in the rolling. (A fact that suggests that the Luddite rioters were not so entirely benighted as they appeared to our progressive fathers!) The machine in question was a foreign invention and

patent; but it is obvious that a British manufacturer competing with the foreigner could not afford to do without its labour-saving aid.

It was in the same town and on the same day that I inspected another new triumph of the brain inventive—this time on a larger scale. An engine, also of recent installation, and which, for all the power it diffused throughout a factory, required for its running, on an eight-hour shift, only one man and a boy. The earlier type which it had superseded stood idle in a shed nearby, scrapped because less satisfactory from the point of view of the wage-bill—and scrapped, no doubt, of necessity, since competition must be faced. The demands on humanity of the superseded engine had been far more extensive than those of its successor; instead of one engineer and one boy, it had required for its running no less than eight men per shift. Trade being good, the factory was working the clock round and, during its twenty-four hours of activity, three men and three boys were employed in that engine-room, in the place of twenty-four men who had once drawn their weekly wages! . . . Then another instance, from another northern district—one of those classed as Special Areas. There, at the time of my visit, trade, at long last, had made an upward move, and one of the symptoms of reviving health was the reopening of a steelworks which for several years had been closed. Talking to one of the municipal officials, I surmised that this reopening had meant a considerable drop in the number of local unemployed, but, much to my surprise, I was answered by a shake of the head. 'In that way,' I was told, 'it hasn't made very much difference to the town; before the

works were set going again they were brought up to date as regards equipment; old machinery has been scrapped and new installed—and that, as a matter of course, means fewer men on the pay-roll.’ The boom in trade or the shortage of labour in a particular industry may disguise, for a time, the supersession of man by his creature, the machine; but that supersession goes steadily, steadily on. To be noted also that where the machine does not actually supersede human labour, it will often, as it becomes more fool-proof, dispense with labour’s skill; in the ordinary factory the aid it requires from its human attendants can often be as easily performed by boys and girls, come fresh from school, as by men and women of experience.

Trade Unionism does what it can to mitigate the hardship of the superseding process; discussing the subject with the workers’ representative in a prosperous Yorkshire clothing factory, I was told that the union had been able to insist that improvements should not be introduced at the expense of the firm’s employees; if some new form of mechanism displaced men or women who had worked on an older process, the arrangement was that room must be found for them in some other department of the factory. So far, in that industry, the arrangement has worked well enough but that, my informant said frankly, was due in part to the prosperous nature of the trade in cheap clothing which for several years had been on the up-grade. It might be another matter in a period of slump, when economies in management were a sheer necessity because business was fighting for its life. And there is also this to be thought of: though, under advantageous conditions obtained by Trade

Unionism, improved machinery may not oust those already at work in a factory, it must lessen the future demand for labour and stand in the way of new engagements.

And in field as well as in factory the machine extends its dominion. While this book was in the making, I read, in a paragraph treating of the annual migration from London to the Kentish hop-gardens, that a mechanical picker is already in use in America and has also been tried out in Kent. It is possible, therefore, that ere many years are past, the English growers will employ an assistant which will strip the hop-poles with the aid of perhaps one mechanic and need no provision of sleeping-huts—and the hopper, as we know him, will have vanished off the face of the earth. The wage-earning holiday—the holiday that linked the mean street with the land—will be no more than a memory to thousands of regretful Londoners. The machine, the efficient, obedient machine, will have beaten them out of the field.

It is sometimes pointed out by our birth-rate alarmists that the dominions of the British Empire have their wide open spaces upon which, from Europe as well as from Asia, more prolific races are casting their envious eyes. That, no doubt, is true and perhaps unfortunate; but it is equally true—and perhaps unfortunate—that the Englishman of to-day, being chiefly urban bred, is not of the type required by the newer countries. It may be said without fear of contradiction that there is nothing our urban majority would dislike more heartily than wide open spaces and a life unjostled by their fellows. Like ourselves, the newer countries can breed

all the townsmen they need, and more—hence they ask for no addition to their numbers.¹

Since no limit has been fixed to the advance of the machine and its power of ousting human labour from industry, and since the cheapening of man in the labour market (which means a lowering of the standard of living) is an evil we desire to avoid, there would seem to be no valid reason for alarm at the prospect of a stationary, or even a declining, population. Even if the Communist could establish his millennium of a land of plenty where all was shared out equally—even in that

¹ 'The decline in agricultural employment in some measure may be due to mechanization, but in most cases that is not through any desire on the part of the farmer, but merely because he cannot get labour. Any one reading the agricultural papers will see at a glance that the problem of the shortage of labour is a terrible one to the yeoman farmer who must work his land or starve. My next-door neighbour is trying to farm 600 acres with the assistance of one old man, because he cannot get any more help. Another is two men short—one of our own young men has just been tempted away by a third who otherwise could not milk his cows. In this district the young boys leaving school will not go on to the land. In the last two years one boy only, of all who have left school, has gone into farming. . . . Young men are simply not going into farming—the average age of the farm labourer is getting higher and higher, and I believe that if something is not quickly done there will be no skilled labourers in another generation. . . . In districts where some of the new aerodromes are being made, the plight of the farmer is even worse, and crops are standing ruined for the sake of the labour to gather them.'—Extract from a letter to *Time and Tide* from Mr B. J. Tobey of Longmoor Farm, Aylesbury.

I have been told more than once, and by those who should know, that the day in the country of the London child is not likely to prove a complete success if the country selected is too countrified;

perfected Socialist State, it is difficult to see what advantage would accrue from an ever-increasing population. (So long, that is to say, as the community was peaceful and did not wish to engage in crusades for the spread of its communist ideology.) While, as things are at present, the country as a whole would surely gain by a nearer approximation between the amount of work to be done and the number of workers applying for it. As things are at present, the only section of society which stands to lose permanently from a decrease in our numbers is that not inconsiderable section which lives by the care and education of the young. The child in our modern world is not only the younger generation; it is a vested interest, employing, from infancy to adolescence, vast armies of teachers, inspectors, welfare workers, psychologists, doctors, and nurses. All these, as a class, will be less in demand as the numbers of the young decrease and will therefore suffer professionally. To a certain extent they are suffering already; the less fashionable type of public school, for instance, is said to be 'feeling the

that is to say, if there are no shops or other familiar distractions at hand. As for the same mentality in their elders, here are two instances I vouch for. Of a pair of London women on pleasure bent, one came back disgruntled from a day's excursion to a recommended beauty-spot; her disappointment being due entirely to the fact that there was hardly anybody there. The other—a skilled woman in a trade needing skill—gave as her reason for not caring for the country the absence of that useful institution, the Ladies Room. Both these women were entirely competent in their own sphere of the workshop and the urban house; removed from the street and its adjuncts they would be not only useless but miserable. And their attitude to things rural is not peculiar to the female; they have their many masculine counterparts.

draught' in the matter of entries. This is not to be wondered at, since it draws its scholars from a class which practises birth control as a matter of course; the professional family which once sent two or three brothers in succession to a public school is now—if it be not altogether childless—unlikely to have more than one son to bring grist to the schoolmaster's mill. A similar decline of population in the elementary school is bound to strengthen the teachers' agitation for smaller classes, and we may take it for granted that the persistent demand of the teaching profession for the raising of the school age at one end, and the establishment of nursery schools at the other—we may take it for granted that persistent demand is not altogether disinterested. I hasten to add that I do not mean the desire to extend the sphere of the schoolroom is actually and consciously self-interested; but it is so clearly to the advantage of the teaching profession that the child should be kept for more years at school and taken at an earlier age from home that some bias is almost inevitable. Child welfare experts and maternity nurses have the same interest in maintaining the size of the family and ensuring themselves occupation; so have a good many doctors. The nation in general, however, has no such economic interest in the keeping up of the birth-rate; on the contrary, in so far as industry cannot absorb the men and women whose teachers and doctors and nurses it has paid in their youth, it will suffer an economic loss.

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One of the arguments of those who see cause for fear in a less crowded England is the coming predominance

of age over youth; as fewer children are born and grow to maturity, an increased proportion of citizens past work will be a burden on the earning community. That is the argument of the prophets of ill; but even granting a heavy preponderance on the side of the elderly, is it altogether correct? The expensive age in a modern State is the age of childhood and youth; the educationist, like the horse-leech's daughter, is always crying 'Give, give!' and the time and the millions spent on education and child welfare—on organizations, official and voluntary, for the benefit and amusement of the young—must far exceed what we spend in time and money upon men and women past work. While the burden of youth on the nation grows heavier year by year, and its weight, in certain classes, is a direct cause of family limitation, there is not at present the same tendency to lavish care and money on old age. And for matter of that, not all persons over sixty are senile, as the prophets seem to imagine; many of the elderly, when compulsorily retired, are still capable of mental and bodily labour and in a state of society where competition from their juniors was less keen they would certainly be given employment. For some years past much of my own content and comfort has been due to the kindly services of a great-grandmother; who daily makes a welcome appearance at my house and—in spite of remonstrance—frequently insists on doing much more than she is paid for.

This also should be remembered, and remembered seriously; the age at which many of our present population are considered past work is an age which in saner conditions would be called the prime of life—there are men of forty-five and even less who have to face a future

without hope of regular employment.¹ A few months ago I was in a northern district where such 'elderly' unemployed abound and where, accordingly, a centre had been started to give them occupation and interest; when I inquired what was the age qualification for admission to membership, I was told that the rule was, no member under thirty-five! Thirty-five—and no likelihood of permanent employment. . . . The plain fact being that, in England of to-day, many men and women are only past work because the work is not there for them to take. And yet we lament a falling birth-rate! ²

¹ See Chapter IX.

² Those to whom decline in population is synonymous with a senile and decrepit England might be encouraged by a study of the aims and objects of the Over Thirty Association—which it may be they have not heard of. The first of these aims and objects runs as follows:

'To overcome the prejudice and ignorance which now militates against the employment of women workers above the age of thirty, and to draw attention to the fact that the main burden of unemployment is now borne by older women.'

There are also some illuminating passages in the report for 1937 issued by the Director of the International Labour Office. In one of these passages it is stated that 'unfortunately there is a perfectly intelligible prejudice in favour of young men and women in shops, restaurants, tea-rooms, road-houses, service stations, or cinemas, although there are thousands of grey-haired gentlemen who could perform the light work required with complete efficiency, save for their appearance.' (The officials of the Over Thirty Association would doubtless add that there are thousands of grey-haired ladies!) Interesting to compare the above passage with the footnote on page 7 which contains the statement, made by a farmer, that the average age of the agricultural labourer is getting higher and higher, because young men will not go on the land. It would appear, therefore, that some of the heaviest and most useful work is being

The cannon-fodder motive for demanding more babies is at least comprehensible. Big battalions as means of defiance or defence: either straightforwardly, as military material destined to conscription, or as a generous supply of Roman Catholic recruits to outnumber the slower-breeding Protestants. It is probably for the same reason that official champions of Labour and Socialism have been slow to mitigate the lot of poverty through spread of birth-control knowledge; like the advocates of a plentiful cannon-fodder, they have counted on numbers—their big battalions—to win them an ultimate victory.¹ (The motive in all these cases, be it noted, is not the advantage of the unborn numbers called for by churchmen, politicians, or soldiers—neither they nor their parents are considered; it is the advantage of some cause which they are predestined to uphold either by their votes or their arms.)

As we in England do not, in the manner of continental nations, insist on military service from our citizens, there would seem to be no military reason why we should demand a rising birth-rate—rather the other way. It seems to be agreed that the decisive factor in future wars will be the air arm; and that being so, numbers will not always mean strength. From the point of view of safety and national defence, an urbanized

done by the middle-aged and elderly, while the young get preference in the matter of lighter duties. Luxury trades are mostly staffed by the young; and luxury trades, as a general rule, do not entail heavy work.

¹ To be noted, however, that it was when Labour was in office (in 1930) that M.C. Welfare Centres were authorized to instruct in contraceptive methods—though only in the case of married women whose health would suffer through pregnancy.

people, living in crowds, is a vulnerable people when it comes to attack from the air. It looks as if the nation that will come off best in the next world-massacre will be the nation that lives scattered and offers small targets to the airman. Since no limit has been set to his destructive power—since scraps of paper are but scraps of paper and the age of civilian immunity has passed—the size of our London target suggests that there may be other ways of committing race-suicide beside the use of contraceptives.

What our birth-rate alarmists sometimes forget is that the growth in population of the last few generations is a growth without historical precedent; after eighteen centuries of recorded life, from the coming of Caesar to the reign of George the Third, the population of England and Wales was still under the nine million mark, while at the last census (of 1931) it was more than four times that number. If we continued to increase at the same rapid rate, another century or so would produce an England seething with humanity and covered, from Land's End to Berwick-on-Tweed, with council houses and speculative builders' estates—with perhaps a few acres of National Trust property as museum pieces of old England. Even the alarmist will hardly find the prospect alluring.

There should be nothing inherently alarming in the likelihood that the phenomenal rate of increase of the nineteenth century will be followed by a corresponding drop. And—in addition to considerations of space and landscape—can it be maintained that we are better and happier for living in a community of swarming millions, which is far more difficult to weld into a manageable

unit than a state of reasonable size? It stands to reason that the larger the community, the more numerous its conflicting interests—and therefore the more numerous the laws and regulations by which the free action and movement of its people must be hampered. If history lies not, it is the small state which has usually produced the best brains; witness Greece, and the city-states of Italy, the Germany of Luther and of Kant—which was a Germany divided into separate communities, not a solidly national Reich. And witness also Elizabethan England—with her Shakespeare, her Spenser, her Bacon, her Burleigh — whose few little millions (somewhere about five) would not have peopled our London. Huge agglomerations of human beings would seem to be unfavourable to the growth and development of intellect; presumably because, as members of a herd, if they are to live in peace and decency, they are, and must be, subject to constant regimentation. That is to say, to a constant limiting of individual responsibility and therefore of individual development.¹

¹ A familiar instance of what I have called regimentation is the Belisha crossing. Absolutely necessary in the present rush of our streets—but the more it attains its object of immunity for the foot-passenger, the more mechanical and regulated will his walks abroad become. It is noticeable, too, that of recent years London bus-conductors and others who deal with us in quantity have begun to direct us vociferously, as if we were animals being herded through a gate instead of human beings who know how to step into a bus or take seats in an underground train. This, in contrast to the Belisha crossing, appears to be a rather unnecessary form of regimentation, but it is accepted without protest by the ordinary Londoner—who, if he were one of a smaller community, less used to direction, would probably feel annoyed and insulted at being treated as if he were a sheep.

II. THINGS WE DO AS WELL AS IN . . .

IN the early summer of 1937 I received an invitation to an afternoon festivity which, much to my regret, I was unable to accept. The card that conveyed it was sent from an establishment which, in my younger days, was known as Aylesbury Gaol but of recent years has been rechristened as His Majesty's Borstal Institution. So the invitation was headed, and its wording ran as follows:

'The Governor and Staff request the pleasure of your company at the Annual Garden Party and Sports and Exhibition and Sale of Handicrafts on Wednesday June 30 from 2-6 p.m. (The profits from this fund are used entirely for the benefit of the Girls and Women.)'

But although, by reason of intervening distance, I was unable to attend the annual garden party of His Majesty's Borstal Institution, there was an occasion, a year or two earlier, when I did spend a good many hours on its premises and saw something of its inmates and its methods. As the name denotes, the great majority of the inmates are girls committed under the Borstal system; that is to say, the stigma of imprisonment does not attach to them and they are treated, not as young law-breakers worthy of punishment, but as girls needing special supervision and discipline in order to correct the defects of their character or training. Many of them, in all probability, are more comfortably lodged and bedded at Aylesbury than in the surroundings from which they

were removed by the law; the cells of yesterday are now known as rooms and the change is not only one of name. True, the windows are still set high in the walls, so high that the occupants cannot see out of them; but that is a structural legacy from the past and in other respects the little rooms are friendly enough. One of the aims of the system there practised is to avoid unnecessary regimentation; hence, provided she keeps her belongings tidy, each girl is allowed to arrange her room according to her own private tastes. As an instance of such individual arrangement, I remember a bed being placed diagonally across a corner, instead of alongside the wall. Most people, I imagine, would have preferred the usual arrangement, as the bed not only made an awkward line to the eye but lessened the apparent size and available space of the room; still, the girl who slept in it liked to have it so, and the room was hers to arrange. Several of the rooms I was allowed to look into had their display of home photographs; while one wall, I remember, was decorated with a page from an illustrated paper, showing portraits of the then Duke and Duchess of York. In others there were dresses hanging on the wall—dresses for use in the world beyond the gates—which, it was told me, the girls had made for themselves.

As to the work to which the girls are set, there is no week after week monotony about it; open-air duties alternate with indoor occupations. The Institution is more than a building, having fields and farmyard as well as its laundry and kitchens; a girl who goes through her Borstal term with diligence must be well equipped for her future life in many domestic respects. Incidentally, the length of her sojourn at Aylesbury will depend



AT THE WRIGHT-KINGSFORD CHILDREN'S HOME, FINCHLEY



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SUNDERLAND FOOTBALL TEAM AT TRAINING

to a certain extent on herself: when it is considered by those in authority that she has sufficiently profited by her training and discipline—or her absence from previous undesirable surroundings—she will be returned to the world outside. There are cases where return to the world is followed by re-entry at Aylesbury; in such cases, I was told, it is made clear to the too-persistent inmate that second visits are not encouraged; she is disallowed some of the small privileges and pleasures she enjoyed on her previous stay.

Whatever it calls itself, the Aylesbury establishment has not been wholly diverted from its original use as a gaol; although, of its several hundred inmates, the great majority are Borstal girls, a part of the building still accommodates women offenders and criminals who are prisoners in the ordinary sense. Among them, on the day I visited the place, were three elderly and experienced breakers of the law; hardened old ladies who, time and again, had served their sentences and emerged into freedom—only to resume the old way of life and return to their familiar penitentiary. Finally, by sheer perseverance in the path of evil-doing, the trio had qualified for the indeterminate sentence—the last resort of the Law in dealing with habitual crime. There are, I was told, in our prison population, a good number of men who have reached the repetitive stage of crime which justifies an indeterminate sentence; but among the female prison population the three old ladies of Aylesbury Gaol were, at that date, the only specimens of the irreclaimable class.

As I have never been taken round a men's prison, I cannot speak with any personal knowledge of the treatment of the hardened male criminal; but, so far as I

could judge on a cursory visit, the treatment of the hardened females of Aylesbury did not err on the side of severity. The first of the trio, when I made her acquaintance, was sitting in her 'room' with the door wide open; at liberty, did she wish it, to stretch her legs in the passage—a spacious passage. In appearance she did not suggest a career of crime; on the contrary, she was a benevolent-looking, pleasant-spoken old soul, and this benevolent appearance and pleasant address had no doubt been part of her stock-in-trade—she had been, I was told, a swindler of infinite resource. When we called—my escort was the governor herself—the old lady was engaged, with a good-sized flower-pot, in the planting of a miniature garden. Her plants were of the simplest—daisies and buttercups and tufts of grass culled from the fields of the institution—but they were arranged with no little skill; garden-making on a miniature scale was evidently a hobby in which the old sinner excelled. When I admired her handiwork she accepted the compliment with the air of one who knew it well deserved. 'When I was in Holloway,' she announced without a trace of embarrassment, 'I made one for the governor and he sold it for a charity and got thirty shillings for it.' As I have said, no embarrassment; she was perfectly at ease in the surroundings to which long use had accustomed her; and addressing the governor with obvious friendliness she informed her that a fellow-irreclaimable—whom let us call Smith—was desirous of having a word with her. 'It's something she's read in the paper and she wants to tell you about it.' Whereby I realized that perusal of the papers was not forbidden even to the hardened offender!

Our next call accordingly was made on Mrs Smith—would have been made on her in any case; the governor informed me that ill-feeling would certainly have been aroused if a visitor to the establishment had been taken to see only one of the old irreclaimables and passed the others by without a call. One call, as it happened, sufficed for the pair as when we arrived they were keeping each other company. Smith, engaged on some needlework, was a cheerful-looking body whom, if I had seen her in normal surroundings, I should never have suspected of so much as petty larceny; her companion, however, was distinctly unattractive—a stolid-faced woman who stared at you with hard, beady eyes. She was the only one of the three irreclaimables whose acquaintance I felt that I might not care to improve.

To them, as to the gardening expert, the governor's visit was evidently welcome; all the more welcome, no doubt, for the addition of a stranger whose face and garments they surveyed with undisguised interest. My introduction having been effected and acknowledged, the governor said she understood that Smith had something to say to her. Yes, indeed, Smith had—and a remarkable something it was! It appeared that, in her study of the newspapers, Mrs Smith had come across a statement concerning the average annual cost of an inmate of His Majesty's prisons—the average amount expended by the taxpayer for his lodging and board and safe keeping. And having read the statement she had worked out the sum which she and her husband—whose habits apparently were the same as her own—had extracted from the pockets of the British taxpayer in the course of their ill-spent lives. The sum, by her reckoning, ran to a good many

thousands; and whether or no her reckoning was accurate, it certainly must have amounted to a formidable total. The point of the story, however, is that Smith was proud of its size; it was with an air of importance and a gratified smile that she informed the governor of her own and her husband's achievement—for achievement she clearly considered it. The money their criminal instincts had cost us might have been a pension awarded by a grateful country to those who had served it long and worthily.

I have said that Smith's announcement was made with a smile; and I have a suspicion that if the governor had not, at that moment, been attacked by a cough, it might have been received with another. As it was, she avoided my eye, made some brief remark as the cough subsided, and the pair of us reserved our comments until we were out of Smith's hearing. . . . There are many different methods of attaining distinction; but Mrs Smith, from her enforced retirement at Aylesbury, had revealed to me a method of which I should never have dreamed.

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Between the old habitués and the Borstal girls comes the class of prisoner serving an ordinary sentence. One of these, on the day of my visit, had met with an accident—had scalded herself during cleaning duties by upsetting a pail of hot water. The scalding was sufficiently severe to necessitate hospital and, with myself in tow, the governor called in to ask after her. As the water had splashed her face it was swathed in bandages and not much of it visible; but nurse was reassuring in the matter of scars and the governor congratulated her on keeping her beauty unspoilt—finishing up by asking

if a cigarette would be acceptable? Needless to say, it was acceptable—and the governor produced and lit the cigarette, with a warning not to drop sparks on the bedclothes—‘or you’ll get me into trouble with nurse!’

It has been said already that newspapers are not denied to the occupants of Aylesbury, whatever their status; while another link with the outside world is the occasional ‘talk’ by visitors on subjects likely to interest them. Of the annual sports and garden party mention has also been made; and I learned, in the course of my visit, that the fancy dress party is also permitted to the Borstal girls—fancy dress consisting of garments of their own contriving. On one occasion the success of the day was a girl who got herself up as Hitler; and this choice of a character—so I was assured—was not the result of contumely. On the contrary, the Fuehrer is—or was—much admired by the inmates of Aylesbury Borstal Institution.

I do not know enough of the Borstal system to pronounce with any certainty on its ultimate effects on the girls it is intended to reform; but I suppose that, like most systems, its success or failure depends chiefly on those by whom it is administered. This at least I can say, that travelling back to London in the same train as myself was a young woman, once an inmate, who had done well since leaving, and had come, that afternoon, to call upon a governor who was also looked on as a friend. And hers was not a solitary instance.

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On my journey back to London my thoughts ran something like this:

There are worse ways of spending one’s elderly years

than in gaol, as an habitual criminal—worse ways in England, at any rate. Your surroundings are no longer gloomy, you are treated with friendliness, you are not debarred from companionship. You have no financial anxiety, no counting up of shillings when rent day comes round; and in case of illness there is no out-patient queue, no waiting for admission to hospital—the best of attention is at hand.

That was one of my thoughts concerning Aylesbury: and this was another:

If this English institution for the prevention and necessary punishment of crime could be transferred several hundred miles eastward from Aylesbury to Moscow and peopled with Soviet officials and Soviet breakers of the law: then would it not follow, as the night the day, that Intourist parties would be led by their guides to admire its amenities and its praises be sung by Left Wing professors and their fellow-devotees of all things Russian? . . . As it is, the Borstal Institution of Aylesbury is accessible from London, not from Moscow or Leningrad—and therefore, presumably, unworthy the notice of persons of progressive outlook.

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The same thought came to me recently when, in the company of one of its workers, I visited an institution at Leeds which is known as a Babies' Welcome. There I watched the inspection and weighing of the welcomed; the advising of their mothers by doctor and nurse; and the sitting round with cups of tea when the business of the afternoon was over. Nineteen of these Babies' Welcomes are doing their work in the city of

Leeds, served for the most part by voluntary helpers. 'The gramophone records on diet of expectant mothers and breast-feeding have been listened to attentively and much appreciated'—so runs a paragraph in a report from one of the Welcomes, while another centre reports that it held, during health week, a demonstration of 'a complete day's meals for the toddler. All these meals were cooked on the premises on one gas-ring. Prices and instructions as to cooking were explained to the mothers at each session. The meals shown were enough for four children at a cost of ninepence and were a complete vitamin diet.' In addition, at several of the centres there are play groups, run by voluntary workers; a mother will bring her youngster once or twice a week to be taken off her hands and to play in his pen with bricks and sand and other elementary delights. It is a fact established by the city's experience 'that there is much greater chance and likelihood of health . . . for mothers and babies who regularly attend the Welcomes' than for those who dispense with their help. If the Welcomes were of Soviet or Viennese origin, I am sure I should have read their praises in the works of some enthusiastic tourist! . . . As it is—what is Leeds? Just England! England where, the parlour Bolshevik will assure you, that nothing is ever done for any one.

And again, soon after, the same thought struck me, as I came away from an afternoon spent with a friend of mine who was temporarily in charge of a home for children in one of London's northern suburbs. The Home, she told me, as she showed me round, was founded nearly forty years ago by two women—one of

them still at its head—who sought to mitigate the hardships of the unmarried mother and to save the child she could not keep from the workhouse or the baby farmer. For the children it provides good food and healthy surroundings and—very obviously—the kindliness that calls forth affection; the object of those who have care of them is ‘to lay a stable foundation whereon they may develop into healthy, useful members of the community.’ The children are not taken in free—except, I believe, in special cases; but the charge made is small and varies with the mother’s ability to pay. So far as possible, mother and child are kept in touch with each other—regular visits are expected when distance allows—and it was impressed on me that the Home exists in order to help them both. In the beginning it was a purely private undertaking; but as time went on and its scope extended, it was incorporated in the Shaftesbury Society and nowadays is aided by a Government grant. I should add that it does not confine its good offices to children born out of wedlock; any case of real hardship is eligible. I was told of a young woman, the wife of a chauffeur, who, as the time neared for the birth of her baby, made her husband promise that, if she died, he would take the child to the Home, where she knew it would be loved and cared for. Such forebodings are not infrequent before a first baby is born, but in this case foreboding was justified; the husband, left a widower, dashed up to the door in his master’s car to beg the matron to take charge of his motherless twins. Needless to say they were received and cared for until, a few years later, the father remarried and could give them a home of their own.

There were twins in residence on the day of my visit,

twins who were specially shown to me. A boy and a girl, solemn, sleek-haired, black-eyed, and brown-skinned; their faces oddly mature and dignified as compared with their chubby contemporaries. Half-caste babies, the children of a Cingalese father; who, tiring of England or his family or both, had taken ship for his native Ceylon—where is no validity for the order of an English bench. And taking his walks, or rather his waddles, round the lawn was the result of a similar irregular union which had ended in similar fashion; an infant mulatto boy, brown and woolly-headed, whose father had likewise tired of his family responsibilities and cast the dust of England from his feet. These dark-skinned babies, however, were exceptions; the rest of the youngsters were of normal English colouring.

I should not like to assert that these children cared for in the suburb of Finchley seemed happier than a covey of Moscow infants to whom I was once introduced. If I remember aright, the Moscow youngsters were as sure as the English that a stranger was a friend; an attitude which, in children as in animals, bears witness to kindness in those who have had them in charge. But as regards sanitation and surroundings, the balance was all against the Moscow babies; who, for one thing, lacked the garden with its wide expanse of lawn where the Finchley babies wobbled to and fro or rolled on their rugs in the company of teddy bears and rabbits. . . . If that Finchley garden were transported to Moscow and there made an exhibit for the foreign tourist, we should soon read its praises in the works of enthusiastic Russophiles!

But what is Finchley? Just England, and therefore

uninteresting. An England that the dweller in Bloomsbury might reach in less than half an hour, by means of the prosaic bus! . . . But there is no Society for Cultural Relations with Finchley or Leeds or the many other English towns and districts that are doing their job without advertisement!

III. ENGLAND UNBEAUTIFUL

FROM Liverpool, on a Sunday afternoon, I was taken by road to Delamere Forest in the county of Cheshire, where is woodland both ancient and modern. It lies well on the Cheshire side of the Mersey and is one of the remnants of English forest-land—to-day a very small remnant; of late years it has been taken in hand by the Forestry Commission, and its title, since they dealt with it, should be Delamere Plantations rather than Delamere Forest. For that—a series of conifer plantations—is what the commission have made of a district that yesterday was lovely as Arden; they have cut down the forest our fathers left us and planted, in its stead, their regiments of gloomy little Christmas trees. Acre after acre of Christmas trees in varying sizes; some grown, some half-grown, some of nursery stature—and all of them, all of them, monotonous!

As I have said, there is a remnant of the old wood left to us. The Forestry Commission, I believe, is a law unto itself, endowed by Parliament with authority in the matter of plantation; but perhaps, before utter destruction had been wrought, some effective protest was made to it by those with a right to be heard; or perhaps the Forestry Commission itself has an elementary aesthetic conscience which was stirred to repentance while yet there was something to be saved. Whatever the cause, the axe was stayed and something was saved;

on each side of the road that runs through the forest is a fringe of trees other than conifers, a strip of old greenwood that hides from the motorist the ill that has been wrought beyond it. At a guess (speaking from memory) I should say the strip, on the side we walked it, was somewhere between fifty yards and a hundred yards in width; a reminder of that which had been in times gone, the last relic of an English heritage. Indignation may have been father to the thought, but I was told by those who escorted me to Delamere that it was doubtful whether these conifer plantations would thrive in the soil of Cheshire; thrive, that is to say, into real commercial value, like the pinewoods of Norway or the Alps. But even if the conifers do flourish in Cheshire and eventually prove a good investment for the country, there are (so urged my friends) many stretches of moor and barren hillside where the Forestry Commission might have dug and planted without the destruction of old woods. Not being skilled in the art and craft of forestry, it would be unwise on my part to venture an opinion as to whether the commission's frequent preference for the fir species is justified from the business point of view; but if it is justified and, in years to come, the pinewoods of England rival Norway and the Alps in providing us with pit-props—if so, one can only regret, for the sake of the landscape, that the wood of the oak, the ash, and the hornbeam is not, like the spruce, possessed of marketable qualities.

I do not know how much protest has been raised in the country round against the commission's drastic activities in Delamere Forest, but in the Lakeland district—and perhaps in others—they have roused oppo-

sition which has sometimes been effective in checking the spread of the conifer. Sometimes but not always; Ennerdale, I believe, has been thoroughly and gloomily invaded. . . . Let me add that I have no desire to 'crab' the Forestry Commission as such; rural England assuredly has need of it. But I am not alone in wishing that it could combine with its beneficial activities a little more regard for English landscape.¹

The Forestry Commission is not the only disfiguring agency at work in Delamere Forest, which, lying as it does within easy motoring distance of such centres of population as Liverpool and Manchester, Stockport and Warrington, gets its full share of Sunday and holiday visitors. The road that runs through it is a lovely road with wide grass borders overhung by trees; and there it is that cars are pulled up and their occupants descend with the paraphernalia of the picnic. And, being in England, is it needful to state that many non-edible constituents of the picnic remain scattered in squalid profusion on the grass when those who have scattered them depart? Wrappings that once contained sandwiches, scraps of coloured cardboard, silver paper, and cigarette boxes—messy reminders of a citizen's holiday, they lie wilting and rotting by the roadside. Being in England, that is what we are doomed to contemplate in the rural localities where our people take their holiday pleasure.

There is this to be said in excuse for the prevalent litter habit: progress in our heating and cooking arrangements has often enough meant the disappearance of the coal-fire—and lack of a coal-fire often makes it difficult for the average citizen to dispose of his odds and ends

¹ See Note A.

of refuse. In days gone by there was the open hearth with a flame that consumed the odds and ends; and, more effective still, there was the kitchen-range which could be stoked with much of the inflammable matter that now goes into the dustbin—its only receptacle in a really modern dwelling where heat and light are the product of gas and electricity. If the picnicker is of the conscientious order, and does gather up his refuse and take it home, the chances are he can no longer burn it—it must go into the household bin. And unless that bin is of unusual dimensions, it will probably be full, and overfull, before the municipal vehicle comes round for its emptying. To be noted, also, that the years which have placed these added difficulties in the way of litter-disposal have provided us with added quantities of litter to dispose of. No road that leads to a holiday haunt is without its ice-cream tricycle; hence the ice-cream tub and its accompanying spoon are now as common objects of the wayside as the cardboard boxes that once held cigarettes. Then there is the growth of the wrapping habit; one of the characteristics of the modern trader (in England at any rate) is his fondness for wrapping up his wares. In a box of chocolates many, if not all, will have a silver covering; often each chocolate will have its little crinkled dish, and the layers of dishes will be separated from each other by sheets of coloured paper and repose on a bed of shredded tissue. As none of these various papers are edible or have any use save as wrappings for sweets, they must somewhere be disposed of as rubbish—and the somewhere is all too frequently the spot where the chocolate has been eaten. Yet another addition to the wayside dustbin is the trans-

parent substance known, I think, as cellophane, which appears to be something like a craze with the trader of to-day; he not only employs it for the wrapping of cigarettes, sugarplums, and cakes of soap (thus preventing the purchaser from sampling their scent), but also for tightly-corked bottles of lemonade, etc., where it is a nuisance to the buyer and a needless expense to himself. Being transparent, the substance, when torn off and scattered to the winds that blow, is not so offensive in appearance as newspaper, cardboard, or matchboxes; still, it adds to the general unpleasantness of the picnicker's legacy of mess.

But when all is said and done, the prime cause of litter is the litterer; that section of the public—its majority, unfortunately—which has been bred to no understanding of the earth and therefore to no reverence for its gifts. The land, the earth which is the source of life, to them is just 'the country'—by which they mean a playground, a larger edition of their parks, their public gardens, and their Clapham Commons. A playground where they can be even messier than they are in parks because, as a rule, there are no keepers. The country is for them to do as they like with, when they take their holidays abroad; and the plain fact is that they like making litter. If they think of the matter at all, they will know it is only a minority of their countrymen—a tiresome minority—that fusses about bottles and cigarette-ends on the grass; the majority of excursionists are quite undisturbed by the sight of their predecessors' squalor. . . . I believe that, as far as possible, a man should be allowed to amuse himself in his own way—not have other people's tastes and forms of enjoyment

thrust on him; in a really and ideally democratic community, those citizens who cannot enjoy their playground without making a mess of it would have their right to messiness admitted. Their needs would be provided for in special districts where they could deposit their bottles, throw about their matchboxes and ice-cream tubs and be just as disgusting as they pleased; on the other hand they would be sternly penalized if they defiled other districts (reserved for the more cleanly) with traces of their holiday passing. Such a partition of the country would be fair to all, to the vandal as well as to those who have reverence in their souls; unfortunately it is impossible in the England of to-day, so, with rare exceptions, the vandal defiles where he will.

It is to be feared that most of the inhabitants of England are flatly indifferent to vulgarity of surrounding; if it were not so, we could not have produced the builders—or the tenants—of the general run of post-war suburban estates; those regiments of bungalows and sham-Tudor villas which have taken possession of what once was the pleasure of the Home Counties. It is unlikely that their builders intended to desecrate the countryside; they accomplished desecration because they knew no better and many, no doubt, feel a real admiration for their handiwork. As for the occupants, few, I imagine, are conscious of any stirring of resentment at the mean proportions or the foolish pretensions of their dwellings. Taken as a race we appear to have lost that sense of rightness in roof, wall, and window which, judging by what the centuries have left us, was once common to every class of Englishman. Our fathers of a few generations back built good cottages as well as good



L.M.S.

RURAL ENGLAND AS BUILT IN AN 'ILLITERATE' AGE

farmsteads, fine terraces as well as fine mansions and churches; the charm and friendliness of the English village is due to what remains of their handiwork and not to our modern additions. Yet many of our local authorities are so little appreciative of English village architecture that they have interpreted the law which gives them powers of slum clearance as licence to destroy the old cottages of their neighbourhood and replace them *en masse* with the works of the local contractor.¹

Why and how have the citizens of twentieth-century England lost their fathers' understanding of the fine possibilities of brick and stone, their fathers' pleasure in the seemliness of building? In part, perhaps, the change is due to the outlook of an age that is given to moving about; the best housing has always been that where the builder hoped to live to the end of his days, and dying, pass it on to his heirs. No man nowadays can be reasonably sure that his sons will inherit what he owns; act of democracy, war, or dictatorship may come between them and their heritage; and that uncertainty, in itself, is a deterrent of good building. Then many of us to-day are birds of passage, changing our lodging every few years; and those who migrate from house to house are less concerned with the architectural defects of their dwelling-place than those who intend to live out their lives beneath its roof.

And the same factor of permanence accounts for many of the public buildings, the wonders of old time that

¹ This modern loss of taste in building is not peculiar to the English race; the French speculative builder, when he lets himself go, can produce results even more horrifying than those which disfigure our Home Counties.

the tourist gapes at, guide-book in hand, as he takes his way around Europe; they were raised for the most part in a spirit of local patriotism. Churches were built to the glory of a city as much as to the glory of God, and the men who built them were the very sons of the city they delighted to adorn. It would be vain to expect that type of filial pride from the daily migrants of our dormitory suburbs, or from the countless thousands who lodge on their shelves in our multiplying blocks of flats. To these the district where they sleep and feed can never be of the importance it was to their fathers, and they will rarely think of themselves with pride as citizens of no mean city. Then speed, in itself, produces an indifference alike to beauty and its lack; the suburbs we drive through are pretentious, unimaginative, but we pass them, at so many miles an hour—as we pass a corn-field bowing to the wind or a park that has not yet fallen to the bid of the speculative builder. And as for the man who drives the car, what does he reckon of landscape or architecture, since his eyes are always on his road! All things have to be paid for, and the price we pay for speed upon the roads is not only a yearly death-roll which more than doubles the death-roll of Wellington's army at Waterloo, but the transformation of the winding English road into the asphalt motor-track. And if you only go fast enough, what does it matter that your asphalt road has a rigid white hem instead of a hedge—where once, in spring, was the hawthorn blossom, and in autumn the red leaf and berry? 'Motor roads, which should be a blessing to modern transport as well as a pleasant addition to the rural scene, more often than not are a menace to both. There is a tendency to drive

new roads straight across country without regard to trees or hedgerows or buildings. Within a few months advertisements, garages, shacks, sporadic and organized ribbon development give a passenger along these roads the impression of running the gauntlet between the worst products of commercial ugliness and quackery. When old roads and bridges are widened or replaced, their quiet charm and measured informality are often destroyed for ever.' ¹ Not many, I imagine, would contradict the above; but the fact remains that most users of the modern motor road, while admitting its ugliness, are not much distressed thereby. The advertisements, garages, and shacks are not ornamental—but what matter when we pass them at our forty, fifty, sixty miles an hour?

It is one of the misfortunes of our modern England that an epoch which has necessitated the rehousing of the nation on an unprecedented scale should have been an epoch in which the generality of our people were completely indifferent to good building. In the course of the last two decades we have not only built houses by the million, but villages by the score have been transformed into suburbs and country estates by the hundred, sliced up into urban building lots. There are few who will deny that, considered as a whole, the result is disastrous aesthetically.

Yet if it had been necessary to do this rehousing business a few generations ago—say, in the seventeenth or eighteenth century—it is safe to say, the result would have been pleasing to the eye; we should have had a

¹ From an article by the Secretary of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, included in *The Scenery of England* by Dr Vaughan Cornish.

rural England of seemly cottages, an urban England of dignified terraces and squares. One reason for this superior seemliness and dignity being, of course, the absence of mass-produced material, bricks, tiles, window-frames, etc.; the houses of pre-railway days were built, as a rule, of material that lay to the builder's hand; the local brick, the stone that was dug from a local quarry, and therefore toned with its surroundings. It is in our progressive, mechanical age that the grey-walled valleys of the Peak district have been disfigured by spots and rashes of red brick—cheaper, no doubt, though brought from a distance, than the stone that is native to the land. And since nothing in this world is an unmixed blessing and a price must be paid for every benefit received, I have sometimes wondered if the price we pay for our book-education is not (in ordinary men, at least) a certain clouding of the eye, a lessening of its power of perception? The art of reading, which opens to us a world of thought and imagination, by that very fact may veil for us, to a certain extent, the details of the world in which we move and have our being. The mere fact that we can read what other men have written diminishes our need to look about and learn for ourselves. Direct a man who has never learned to read to a destination a few streets away, and he will have to keep watch, and careful watch, for the landmarks you have described to him; for the boot shop at the corner, where he turns to the left—for the church, two streets on—for the clock and the post office and the house with the bright green door. Direct an ordinary, or literate, citizen by the same route to the same destination, and all he has to look for, as he goes his way, is the



RURAL ENGLAND IN THE AGE OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION

name written up at a street corner; he will be none the worse if he ignores the existence of the church, the boot shop and the post office. The one, to reach his goal, must rely on his power of observation, the other makes minimum use of it; and a faculty unexercised will in time become more or less atrophied. The likelihood is that, with minimum use in his walks abroad, the ordinary town-dwelling Englishman has lost something of his keenness of perception with regard to landscape and architecture.¹

¹ I am inclined to think it is not only our eyes that have been dulled by the conditions of modern, urban life; I suspect it is often the case with our ears—at any rate as regards the rhythm and music of speech. While this book was in the making I went, one afternoon, into a London church whose clergy have no reason to complain of a falling-off in attendance. It was late when I entered and I had barely taken my seat when a lesson was read from the New Testament, one of the passages concerning the healing of the sick; but lo and behold, the language in which the familiar story was read to us was shorn of its familiar dignity! We were given a version in very much modernized English that (to my ears at least) suggested the instruction book; the old music gone, the old rhythm broken, the old terms translated to their detriment. I found myself wondering why we, who are supposed to be a literate people—who undergo, all of us, several years at school—must have it made clear to us that scribes are lawyers, that the bed which was lowered with a sick man upon it was a mattress, that palsy means the uglier word paralysis? Our rude forefathers, who had small education as we understand the term—and who knew their Bible far better than we do—were content to leave its music unjangled; it is only we, with our schooling behind us, who must have it debased, lest we fail to comprehend its tunefulness! I fear I took less good from that service than I should have done; for it saddened me to think that the Church of England, which should be the guardian of the finest literary heritage of Englishmen, should, through any of its clergy, discard that heritage and substitute, in the teaching of its people, a jog-trot and

Whatever the cause, it is obvious enough that the majority of our people have lost a sense that their fathers possessed in abundance—of proportion in housing and fitness in relation to surroundings. Any one who doubts the above statement should take the northward road out of London, pull up at Barnet and consider it. Consider, in the first place, Barnet town; which, in its newer quarters, is a specimen, a not unfavourable specimen, of the urban England we, of our generation, have been making. Having duly observed—and not, I shall hope, with any great enthusiasm—let him leave modernity behind him for Barnet Green; where is still a piece of England as an elder generation left it—a piece of England worth looking at!

It may be that progress has now swept them away—it is a good many years since I saw them; but in a West Country village, lying close to the sea, there used to stand a little crescent of fisherman's cottages, most excellently designed for protection from wind and weather. Those who planned it had the force of an Atlantic gale in their mind and, as a beginning, it was placed in a valley in such shelter as the ground afforded. Then, most wisely, the crescent was so built that its concave side faced inland up the valley, its convex side towards the sea; thus the outward curve broke the force of any gale swooping in from the Atlantic and gave it no corners to whistle round. Yet another proof of local

uninspired English. And arrived at home I hunted up the passage in which Lord Baldwin speaks of his 'profound gratitude that the names of flowers, of villages, of stars and birds, were given in those dark centuries, long before our people were educated and had the advantage of cheap literature and a popular press.'

common sense was the fact that the front doors and windows of the cottages were on the inland, the concave side; so that even in the fiercest of westerly storms the doors could be opened without a struggle and the windows would not rattle in their frames. Such were the wise and comely little houses that had sheltered, I doubt not, many generations of fishermen's families—built, as they were, by men who knew their weather and their coast. Likely enough they had the sanitary defects of an age that thought more of warmth than ventilation; if so, their constructors should not be blamed for not being in advance of their age. What they sought was protection against their prime enemy, the wind, and that they obtained in skilful fashion.

In the same seaside neighbourhood was a contrast to the wisdom of the fishermen's crescent; a row of new villas, destined for the lodgement of holiday visitors, and raised, I imagine, by some speculator whose one aim and object was profit. In order to make them attractive to visitors by giving them a view of the Atlantic Ocean, he had perched them on high ground, with no shelter from the wind, and furnished them with large bay windows, suggesting Victorian suburbia. I remember wondering whether the person responsible for those pretentious windows had ever faced a gale on the Atlantic seaboard—and whether the windows themselves would be able to face one successfully. Even in a moderate wind from the sea those villas must have been noisy with the rattling of windows in their frames, and the frequent banging of doors. I have never forgotten the contrast between these two specimens of domestic architecture; the one, the product of local skill, common

sense, and experience, the other of mass-produced plan and imported material.

It is a saddening thought that much beauty of landscape is only preserved so long as it is hidden away from the British public; it is, I hold, an aesthetic sin to direct the attention of that public to any loveliness of cliff, village, valley, or height with which it is not already acquainted. The public has its rights, but so also has the beauty of Nature—and one of those rights is respect. Damn a cliff or a village, a valley or a height with the name and title of 'view' or 'beauty-spot,' put it in a guide-book and mark it as such, and, if it be accessible, you will draw to it relays of motor-buses, whose occupants, after a brief glance at the advertised view, will make straight for Ye Olde Tea Shoppe or the new hotel and there take refreshment to the familiar strains of the radio. And the petrol station will rear its pumps, the ice-cream tricycle wander up and down; and the grass where you stand to see the best view will look like Box Hill on Bank Holiday. And land will be sold in the neighbourhood and bungalows raised . . . and strains of the radio jazz band will be loud on the midnight air. . . .

I hold that we owe it to our heritage of England to save it, where possible, from fate so ignominious; and there is accordingly one class of my countrymen of whom I find it difficult to think without bitterness. It is a small but industrious class which—because it likes to or because it needs—is continually revealing in the columns of the press the whereabouts of 'unspoilt' districts and roads unfamiliar to the motorist: with the natural result that the 'unspoilt' district gets its buses

and Olde Tea Shoppes, and the by-roads where once it was safe to dawdle get their Sunday procession of cars.

I once wrote a murder story where the crime, I considered, was justified. Because his motive was unusual, and therefore unguessed, the murderer was never discovered and lived undisturbed by the law and not very much disturbed by his conscience. He killed his man in order to preserve a secret corner of England which, being secret, was unvulgarized. The victim was a cheerful little maker of travel-books for motorists who, wandering about in search of new material, found what he wanted in the secret corner and announced his intention of writing about it and so putting a new beauty-spot on the map. Whereupon the man to whom the charm of his valley was a sacred thing journeyed up to London and slew the little author before he could accomplish desecration. Looked at in one light, the story has not a good moral; but looked at in another, it has.

IV. CORNWALL—DEAD INDUSTRIES AND LIVING

IT was a mistake on the part of the Delectable Duchy to jut to its farthest west at Land's End; it could have accomplished its farthest much more dramatically at a point a few miles to the northward, the cape that bears its name of Cornwall. There is no comparison between the two headlands, for while Land's End merely comes to an end, Cape Cornwall thrusts itself into the Atlantic; as a mass of rock, a small mountain of a cape, that has almost made up its mind to be an island. And on its summit a column that, seen from a distance, might well be a lighthouse but which, in actuality, is a tall brick chimney, a stack built to ventilate the workings of a tin mine below.

The day of the tin mine's activity is over; like all too many others in the Duchy of Cornwall it has ceased to employ its miners and produce its ore; but the stack, though it no longer serves the purpose for which it was erected, still does useful duty as a landmark for passing ships. It and its derelict mine are no isolated phenomena; the extremity of England is a region of mines that have outlived their purpose—within a radius of two or three miles of Cape Cornwall is a little company of obsolete stacks, with their debris of deserted industry around them. On the road between Morvah and St Just is a signpost still pointing the way to the Levant mine, whose tinnerns plied their labour beneath the Atlantic;

but it is some years now since the mine closed down and the Atlantic waters, for lack of pumping, will have oozed into possession of its galleries. Farther on, at Botallack, is another stretch of ruin—tombstones of dead industry crumbling on the edge of a cliff. All this district round St Just has seen its staple means of livelihood pass from it—and not only the district round St Just; farther inland, on the Redruth-Camborne road, you may guess, from its legacy of debris, what mining once meant to Cornwall. And with closing of mines there has dwindled the long-descended race of Cornish tanners—men whose fathers, in the dawn of Western history, traded their metal for the products of Phoenicia; it is only a minority of the tanner population that has not turned to other means of livelihood or carried its hereditary talent into mining regions overseas. A small minority; for I have heard it said that the working mines of the duchy can nowadays be counted on the fingers; whereas, in the hey-day of the industry, they were numbered not by scores but by hundreds. ‘Fish, Tin, and Copper’ runs the old Cornish toast—to the sources of the county’s wealth.¹

It was on the turn of the nineteenth century that the industry began to fall on evil days, and the miner to migrate overseas: between 1850 and 1900, when the rest

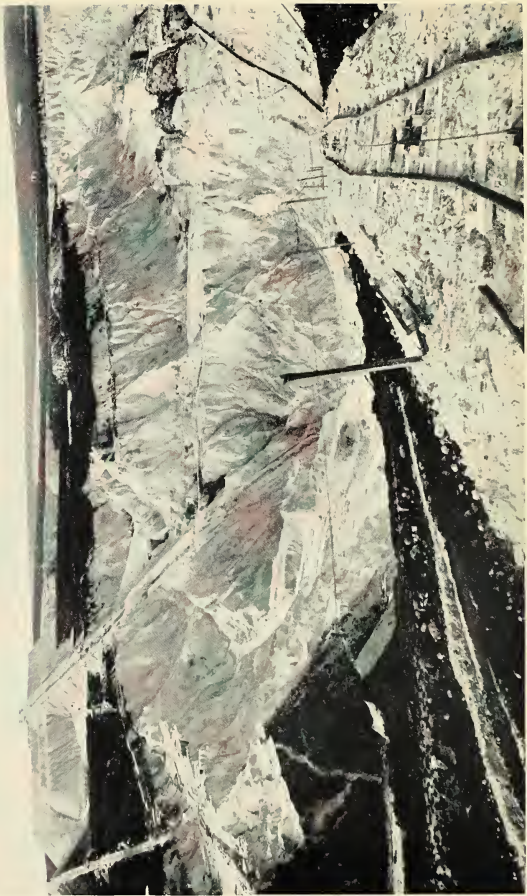
¹ In the days of the Phoenician trade—as for many succeeding centuries—the tin-workers of Cornwall were not miners, as we understand the term; that is to say, they did not work underground. They dug for their tin on the surface of the earth with primitive picks and wooden shovels; shaft mining was unknown to them—it is said to have had its beginnings no earlier than the fifteenth century. By that time the alluvial ‘stream tin’ had to a certain extent been exhausted, and the tanners, from working at outcrops, began to tunnel into hills and cliffs—and so developed into miners.

of England increased rapidly in numbers, the population of Cornwall suffered an actual decline—a quarter of a million, in those fifty years, are said to have left their native county for good. Wherever metal is wrested from the earth—in Australia, South Africa, the United States—there you will find men of Cornish birth or blood.

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Mining is proverbially an industry of ups and downs, and its history in Cornwall provides no exception to the rule; the prosperous era of Cornish tin and copper was preceded, at the end of the eighteenth century, by years of depression—which, in part, was one of the results of war, in part of the opening of copper mines elsewhere and consequent cheapening of the metal. And the miner thrown out of work in the eighteenth century was in a worse plight than his successor of the nineteenth and twentieth; emigration in those days was still an adventure for the few and 'transitional benefit' many generations ahead. While the slump lasted the distress of mining Cornwall was acute—and then came the turn in its fortunes. With revival of demand old mines were reopened, new mines were sunk; among them that Levant, now standing deserted, but which, in its day of activity, made fortunes for its shareholders. As an example of mining luck and fluctuation the Levant would be hard to beat—as witness the following extract:¹ 'In the year 1820 a new company was formed to work the Levant. Twenty shares were issued, on each of which a call of

¹ From an article by Mr A. K. Hamilton Jenkin, author of *Cornish Miner*.



English Clays, Lovering Pochin & Co. Ltd

A CORNISH CLAYWORKS

£20 was made. Before this £400 had been spent a rich bunch of copper was cut within twenty-four feet of the surface, from which the adventurers were able to purchase all the plant. The clear profits of the first twenty years of working were £200,000. Speaking of this mine in 1865 Spargo wrote: "On an outlay of £2 10s. a share, the shareholders have received £1,091 per share." Every person who invested money in this mine received it back 440 times over in forty-four years.'

The adverse swing of the mining pendulum began in the eighteen-seventies with discovery and development of other sources of supply; in Spain and North America, in Australia and the Straits Settlements. Since then the industry has had its ups and downs but, on balance, the downs have prevailed; the whole output of Cornish tin to-day is only a fraction of the amount exported from the mines of the Straits Settlements. There, as in other of the newer mines, the ore lies nearer to the surface than it does in Cornwall; and there, also, cheap native labour is available. Although it has been worked for a good 2,000 years, there is no reason to suppose that the supply of Cornish ore is near exhaustion; I have heard it said that the rocks of the county hide as much tin and copper as the centuries have brought to light. If shafts are closed to-day and engines lie rusting, it is not because the mines have been picked clean of ore, but because, at current prices, it does not pay to work them. Since a like depression has prevailed in times past and been followed by revival, it may be there is hope for the industry; demand and a permanent rise in prices may once again make the mines of the duchy worth reopening. As things are, however, the oldest British industry is

barely alive; and the toast of 'Fish, Tin, and Copper' to-day would have an ironical ring.

But if tin and copper are no longer worth a toast, their place, as provider of Cornish livelihood, has been taken, to a certain extent at least, by the newer product of the clay-pit. Travelling westward through Cornwall, the china-clay district is entered near St Austell—soon after leaving the little junction of Par; it makes itself known to a considerable distance by the many pyramids which rise about Hensbarrow Hill. These pyramids, or sky-dumps, are cones of sand—the waste from the clay-pits; unlike dumps elsewhere, they are white in colour and glisten when the sun shines on them. They are sometimes nicknamed 'the Cornish Alps,' their size being such that they are said to be visible from high ground all over the county. This St Austell region of Cornwall is busied with a prosperous industry; it differs, however, from similar regions in other parts of England in being free from grime—it is not a black country but a white. White runnels of water, white dust on hedges, white roads, white clay on boots. The pits from which china clay is extracted are not pits in the mining sense; like quarries, they are wide-mouthed and open to the air—locally they are known as 'bottoms.' The clay is worked in other parts of the world, but the best of all qualities is worked in Cornwall; hence from Fowey port it is sent far and wide, to serve purposes many and varied.

Most of us, I imagine, if asked to name the principal uses of china clay, would answer, without hesitation, the making of china, and be as surprised as I was to learn that it is only a fraction of the Cornish output that develops into cups and plates. Far more of it goes to

the making of paper than goes to the making of pottery; the best clays are used extensively in producing the finish of good quality writing-paper and the glazed surface required for half-tone blocks—the coarser and yellower sufficing for newsprint, etc.¹ For some of its other—and surprising—uses I quote from a list supplied me by one of the principal companies engaged in the industry, English China Clays Ltd. It is a stiffener for cloth and other textile fabrics; it is employed in the manufacture of blue paint and sulphate of alumina; of papier mâché, rubber goods, whitewash, linoleum, and celluloid articles; of plate powder, toilet powder, tooth powder, soap; of plaster of Paris, of chemical manures, and coloured chinks. Further, I was told by one connected with the industry, it is frequently absorbed into the human system, in the guise both of medicine and of sweetmeat; the pharmacopoeia makes use of it as bismuth, the confectioner as ingredient of the popular chocolate cream. My informant assured me that no objection can be made, on the ground of health, to a dash of china clay in our sweetmeats; on the contrary, it is probably a health-giving substance, judging by the readiness with which horses partake of it. Those employed about the clay-pits will drink whitened water in preference to that untinged by clay—and horses, like most of the brute creation, instinctively know what is good for them. Nor does china clay, in its liquid form, by any means inspire repulsion; on the contrary, its creaminess, alike of hue

¹ A handbook issued for the Cornwall Education Week of 1927 gives seventy-five per cent of the china clay output to paper-making and ten per cent only to pottery—the remainder to miscellaneous industries.

and substance, suggests a pleasant adjunct of the dinner-table. Then, beside the uses of the china clay itself, the waste from its washings—the coarse sand of which the sky-dumps are composed—has of recent years been converted into building material, as ingredient of the concrete block.

A few years ago it was estimated that the china clay industry of the Duchy of Cornwall, with the auxiliary trades that had grown up around it, supported a population of somewhere about forty thousand; while the rapidity with which the industry expanded from its small beginnings in the eighteenth century may be judged from the fact that, between 1853 and 1914, its output had increased from 17,000 tons to between 900,000 and a million.¹ With the War, inevitably, came a period of decline from which, by degrees, it recovered in the post-War years; to-day it provides a means of livelihood for thousands of Cornishmen whom the closing of the tin mines would otherwise have turned adrift. Incidentally the livelihood provided is healthy, with but few of the risks to life and limb run by those who work underground—the tale of accident among china-clay workers is not heavy. I was told, however, that men employed in the drying process have to be assured of sound constitutions before they take on the work; in wintry weather they are exposed, every few minutes, to extremes of

¹ Devon has its china clay works as well as the Duchy, and it is to a son of Devon, not of Cornwall, that the industry owes its birth; one William Cookworthy, who, seeking a substitute for the Chinese *kaolin*, found it in the decomposed granite of the West Country. There are deposits in many other parts of the world—in Ireland, on the continent of Europe, in America—but, so far, the Cornish clays have not been equalled as to quality.

temperature as they pass from the oven-like heat of the drying-house to the tank outside, containing the still liquid clay.¹

When a calling has been handed on from father to son, those who practise it develop an hereditary skill and with it an hereditary pride. None has better claim to hereditary skill, more justification for hereditary pride, than the Cornish tinner with his long generations behind him; hence there is nothing surprising in the fact that when first, from sheer necessity, he turned from tin to clay, he turned with reluctance, as one who comes down in the world. That, in the eighteen-sixties and seventies, was the implication, in the mouth of a miner, of the phrase 'gone to clay'; an implication which passed by degrees as the newer industry expanded its prosperous activities.

It is only when the human being is closely packed and served by the machine that he is confined to one occupation—often to one process thereof; when he lives what is oddly known as the simple life, he will cultivate his various faculties by the exercise of various forms of handiwork. The Cornish miner was no exception to this rule; he was gardener and farmer and likewise builder—would till his bit of land and, when he needed a cottage, would set to and build it himself. And this adaptable tradition of the tinner has been handed on to

¹ From the *Cornish Education Week Handbook*, already quoted: 'There are no pale, haggard faces and wasted bodies amongst the clay men. . . . The men are very muscular, but rather slow-moving, so, as may be expected, they do not excel in popular games like football and cricket, which demand a certain deft nimbleness of foot and finger, but in Cornish wrestling, which demands grip and strength and stamina, they are not excelled the wide world over.'

his successor; in the neighbourhood of a clayworks there were pointed out to me houses—several houses—built by their owners and built, moreover, of concrete blocks which they themselves had manufactured. Like his fellow-countrymen in other parts of England, the Cornish owner-builder of the present day shows a preference for housing of the bungalow type which, to all appearances, he turns out solidly enough; I was told, however, that he usually calls in the local mason or decorator to give the final touches to his residence. (It may be that it would be more interesting, from an architectural point of view, if the mason or decorator did not set a standardizing hand to it!) Nor has the tinner's tradition of the soil been suffered to lapse by the clayworker; whether his dwelling be owned or rented, it is likely to have its garden patch, or its bit of field on which to keep pigs or sometimes cows.

Neither fish, tin, nor copper is to-day what it was in the past, and if Cornwall had only their wealth to depend on, her plight would be wretched indeed. Outside the Duchy the legend still holds that the fisher is the typical Cornishman; but, in sober fact, the race of Cornish fishers is a race that is dwindling fast. There are thirty boats to-day in a little western harbour where, in times gone by, there were eighty—and I read, the other day, that from one Land's End village no boy, for years, has taken to the fisherman's trade. From a woman born and bred on the shores of Mount's Bay I learned of the decline of her native fishing industry; how when she was a girl—not many years past—two building yards were busy in one little port, their output being chiefly

fishing-boats. In their hey-day these yards gave employment to a hundred men; now one of the two had closed down for good and the men employed in the yard still at work numbered between twenty and thirty. Since the sea had so little to offer as reward, young men had left it to seek work elsewhere; it was only the elderly who went out with the boats, and when they died there would be few to follow them. If she did not exaggerate the poverty of her fisherman neighbours, it is not to be wondered at that the younger generation declines the calling of its fathers. Even if that calling were without its special dangers and were far more prosperous than it is to-day, the younger generation would probably prefer the taking of a wage at the end of the week to the financial risks and uncertainties involved by the ownership of a fishing-boat. To the younger generation, in Cornwall as elsewhere, ownership will have fewer attractions than it had for their fathers; for one thing, it means responsibility—which the wage-earner, to a great extent, can escape, and the younger generation is shy of. It means also that the man whose means of livelihood is his boat and his catch has no dole to fall back on when life goes hardly, the qualification for insurance being the contract between employer and employed; and that, in many cases, must be an inducement to forsake the sea for the land. Further, and most importantly of all, the fisherman of to-day—the inshore fisherman who owns his boat—is one of the victims of mechanical progress; which, in the harvest of the sea, is exemplified by the steam-trawler, dragging her net over spawning-grounds and bringing up the immature fish with the mature. The ordinary landsman, dwelling in his street, holds his

fish supply to be practically illimitable and merely a matter of catching; when his newspapers tell him of a local herring glut, he thinks of that local and occasional phenomenon as typical. But, as matter of sane and sober fact, the harvest of the sea, though it may be abundant, is by no means illimitable and—thanks to progress and the small-mesh net—even the deep-sea fish-supply of Europe has of late shown diminution sufficiently rapid and sufficiently alarming to bring nations together in conference. As for the nearer harvest of the coasts, that, inevitably, has suffered even more from the wholesale activities of the steam-trawler.¹

It is not alone on the Cornish coast that our fishing population tends to disappear; the same causes which diminish it in the Duchy diminish it on the shores of the Moray Firth—on the shores of Great Britain in general! Fishing is one of the hereditary trades; those who are not bred to it seldom take to it, and when the fisherman's son turns his back on the boat, his place—even should the trade grow prosperous—is not likely to be filled by recruits from the inland districts. And since the threat of war is no longer so distant as it seemed a while ago, we may well remind ourselves that, in time of stress, our fishing-fleet was not only a fishing-fleet—it supplied us with sailors and minesweepers.²

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¹ A recent blow at the Cornish fishing industry—from which, we may hope, it will in time recover—was dealt by the imposition of 'sanctions' against Italy; Italy, in the pre-sanction era, being a regular buyer of the pilchard.

² In the *Evening Standard* of July 24, 1937 a Hastings correspondent writes that the young men of the Old Town (the fishing quarter)

As the china-clay industry, to a certain extent, has compensated Cornwall for the passing of her mines, so, against the decline of the fishing population, must be set an increase in the number of those who earn a living on Cornish soil by the growing of flowers and vegetables. The flower industry began with the culture of the daffodil in the Isles of Scilly—where the landowners, the Smith Dorriens, were wise enough to realize the advantage of their mild Scillonian winter and early Scillonian spring. The beginnings of the trade with the mainland markets were small; a few boxes packed with narcissus and daffodils and shipped on the little mail boat that three times a week makes the voyage to St Mary's, and three times a week makes the voyage back to Penzance. Since then, those boxes on the Penzance steamer have been multiplied many times over; and more important still, the flower farm has spread from the Isles of Scilly to the mainland. From Falmouth, from Penzance, in the spring of the year, the Great Western Railway, night by night, carries the spoil of the daffodil fields to the markets of London and the midlands. These fields, by

are taking to work on the land, where they get regular pay and holidays. He quotes a municipal councillor to the effect that, in eight or nine years' time, there will probably be no fishing industry in Hastings. 'There are other reasons besides the lack of interest in fishing shown by the lads of Hastings,' he said. 'The expense involved to-day compared with the pre-War days is enormous. It costs anything up to two shillings an hour to provide petrol for the type of engine which must be used nowadays . . . but worst of all is the poaching done by French trawlers. . . . The fleet, which once numbered forty fine boats, is gradually disappearing as the boats are sold one by one, and no new ones are bought to take their places.'

the way, are often very small; little patches of land, sometimes sloping to the sea, and one and all protected—by wall or hedge or natural defence—against the winds from the Atlantic. For if the Cornish climate is mild, it is also tempestuous, and crops unprotected by a windscreen might fare but badly in a gale.

Although it is the daffodil that we chiefly associate with Cornish floriculture, it would be a mistake to imagine that the Cornish grower is a producer of daffodils only. I have walked in a field, near to Falmouth Harbour, where grew violets, and nothing but violets; I have walked in another which was row after row of anemones. The anemone in the Duchy is of younger growth than the daffodil, but, being introduced, it has found its market and spread with a prosperous rapidity; I was told, and by one who speaks of what he knows,¹ that a few years ago there were only some half-dozen growers of anemones in Cornwall, whereas to-day there must be fully five hundred. Tulips are another crop that does well; so do wallflowers, gladioli, irises, stocks, and sweet peas. Nor is it only early flowers that the growers dispatch to their markets; along with the flowers go early vegetables—potatoes, broccoli, lettuce, rhubarb, tomatoes.

Concerning the rise and progress of the Cornish flower and vegetable trade I cannot do better than quote the Horticultural Superintendent for Cornwall. 'It cannot be claimed that the industry is a new one, as flower-growing was started on the Scillies fifty years ago, and the production of early potatoes and winter brassicas has

¹ The Horticultural Superintendent for Cornwall, Mr H. W. Abbiss, D.C.M., M.M., to whom I am greatly indebted for help and information.



Corin, Penzance

A CORNISH FLOWER FARM

also been carried on on the Penzance peninsula for many years. There has been, however, a great expansion of, and an improvement in, the industry during the last ten years. [This was written in 1934.] This progress and expansion can be very largely attributed to the following:

- (a) Improved grading, marketing, and general presentation.
- (b) Improved production.
- (c) Realization of the potentialities of the West through education and advertisement.
- (d) Legislation which has given the grower a feeling of security.'

As the last clause implies, the tariff upon foreign produce has been of no little assistance to the grower; but the clauses numbered *a*, *b*, and *c* are evidence that the recent progress of the industry is due to more than a tariff. As regards flowers, it may be that the Cornishman has a natural talent for their cultivation; certain it is that love for the garden is widespread—there are many in the Duchy to whom a flower show is an event of major importance. It is not alone in the Isles of Scilly that the local landowner has been of service to the industry; I was told of a village to which an amateur horticulturist had brought prosperity by encouraging the growth, in its cottage gardens, of marketable species of flowers.

Between them, the garden and the market garden bring a million a year into Cornwall—and are likely to bring more in the future. In this connection it may be recalled that a few years ago, in the dark days of slump, Mr Baldwin's announcement that the Cornish broccoli industry was thriving was considered a subject for mirth

—the press made merry concerning the prosperity of broccoli. I remember wondering, at the time, why it should be thought ridiculous to prosper by the growing of vegetables; there would, I am sure, have been no outburst of journalistic mirth if Mr Baldwin had announced an expanding demand for motor-bicycles or gramophones; new factories for providing these unnecessary articles would have been taken seriously, as benefits to the nation at large. Perhaps the explanation is that the majority of our people have become so urbanized in life and thought that they have ceased to realize the factor of growth or the necessity of the soil and its products; to what (with no intention of discourtesy) may be described as the school-of-economics mind, a factory turning out bicycles or gramophones is probably of greater importance than a farm producing vegetable food. Curious, but so it is! . . . Education, no doubt, is one of the factors in our present contempt for growth as compared with manufacture; the teacher as a rule has an urban standard of values. A Cornishwoman who farms her own land, and farms it with success, once told me of contempt for agricultural work, as expressed by a teacher in the local elementary school: she (the farmer) had been speaking of the skill of a ploughman, and her enthusiasm for rustic accomplishment was evidently a puzzle to the teacher—who finally objected, from the height of her culture, that the admired ploughman ‘was only an ordinary labourer.’

‘And what,’ said my farmer, ‘what are you to do with people like that, who are bringing up children to despise the most needful work of all? Which is also, when they are country children, the work their fathers live by?’

Contempt for the land and its workers is regrettable,

but so long as our values are reckoned by an urban standard, there is not very much to be done about it. Snobbery is always difficult to combat and the contempt of the urbanized for those who soil their hands with the dust of Mother Earth is snobbery at its most determined. A short talk with that teacher would probably reveal that in her view (as in that of many of her type) it is a far higher thing to sell lipstick than make butter—while the gulf between the man who sows and reaps and the person who instructs in a ‘refained’ accent is so vast as to be almost immeasurable. . . .

Be that as it may, the humorous vegetable, broccoli, is one of the sources of increasing Cornish revenue; and it is safe to say that its cultivation calls for more knowledge and variety of skill than many industrial processes performed with the aid of a machine. Such, for instance, as the guiding of mechanical knives in an endless cutting of the same slice of garment, or shaping of the same piece of boot; a daily monotony which provides the lifework of so many thousands of our citizens.

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Cornish livelihood has changed in thorough-going fashion in the course of the last few decades—Fish, Tin, and Copper have been largely superseded by Garden, Market Garden, and Clayworks. Changes as radical have taken place in other regions of England; but where Cornwall differs from those other regions is in the happy fact that her changes of industry have not, as elsewhere, meant industrialization—the unlimited encroachment of the town on the countryside and absorption of her people into factories.

V. ENGLAND WITH THE BARRIERS DOWN

IN one of the northern areas classified as 'Special' I read, in a local paper, a letter which struck me as significant; the writer pointed out that the area in question, being situated to the west of the Pennines, would be less exposed in war to attack from the air than the east coast industrial towns. And that being so, his suggestion was that the Government should establish munition works somewhere in the district—for the benefit of the nation in general as well as of the district itself.

In a country house in Devon, miles from any large town, I heard of discussions by local authorities on measures to be taken in the event of war—among them, removals from bombarded villages. I asked, would an enemy airman waste his bombs on remote villages in the west of England? And was told, in reply, that one of his objectives would be the main road to Plymouth and Devonport, since by that road the Navy would obtain its supplies. That being so, the villages anywhere near it might have to be evacuated, and their inhabitants housed elsewhere.

I heard much the same talk at the other end of England, in one of the industrial districts of the north-east. By the nature of their product certain works in the district would be more than likely to attract the attentions of the bomber—and when that happened what was to be



Valentine, Dundee

THE NORTH-EAST: A NEWCASTLE SUNDAY MORNING

done with the civilian inhabitants of the town? One suggestion had been that, when alarm of approaching aircraft was given, they should be loaded into vehicles and hurried into the neighbouring countryside, there to stay until the raid was well over; this expedient, however, my informant judged impracticable, as, owing to the speed of the modern bombing aeroplane, it was unlikely that that particular district would have more than a quarter of an hour's interval between the alarm and the attack. Local authority, I gathered, was still discussing the problem.

In His Majesty's Stationery Office in Kingsway, which I had entered in quest of other information, I saw lying on the counter, and priced at fourpence, an Air Raid Precautions Memorandum dealing with Anti-Gas Training; having paid my fourpence, I learned from the pamphlet that the Civilian Anti-Gas School at Falfield, in Gloucestershire, accommodates sixty residential students at a time, and that it was intended, before the end of the current year (1937), to open a second school, of similar capacity, near York. Twelve days is the normal period of instruction and 'the main function of the school is to train instructors who should, on their return to their respective districts, give instruction to members of air raid precautions services, as well as lectures and instruction to such members of the general public as may be interested.' There are also special courses for medical officers of health. These latter courses 'aim at giving a general picture of the dangers of gas attack on the civil population, with a view to guiding those who attend in the problems which gas might create for the services or undertakings for which they were responsible.'

And a day or two after I had read the memorandum, I saw, at the door of my borough free library, a notice informing the public that there would shortly be a meeting, in a neighbouring hall, dealing with air raid precautions! Admission free; and the local organizer of air raid precautions to address it.

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I decided to attend that meeting—a product of modernity, undreamed of in the England of yesterday. I remember, in my childhood, how I used to wonder that men and women could be so rash or so blind to danger as to live on the very slopes of Vesuvius, where a torrent of lava might roll down on their villages as it once rolled down on Herculaneum. Now I wonder no longer, since, one and all, we live over the volcano that the progress of science and the cunning of invention have devised for us.

On the advertised night, accordingly, I made my way to a little hall in a side-street; at the door a young man handed out leaflets to all comers—said leaflets informing us that volunteers were required for instruction in local air raid precautions, women volunteers as well as men. For Red Cross and rescue work and decontamination of gas; as cyclist messengers, removers of wreckage, and wardens for general duties. The leaflet went on to assure us that the need to instruct us in precaution was not ‘related to the belief that war is imminent. It arises from the fact that the risk of attack from the air, however remote, is one that cannot be ignored; and because precautions to minimize the consequences of attack from the air cannot be improvised

on the spur of the moment but must be made, if they are to be effective, in time of peace.'

By the time the lecturer and his chairman arrived, citizens of the borough had assembled in the hall to the number of sixty or seventy; most of them women and most, I should say, of an age to remember the air raids of twenty years gone. It is difficult, almost impossible, for one generation to pass on its experience to another, living in dissimilar circumstances; and that fact, maybe, accounted for lack of interest in air raid precautions on the part of the local young people. They have not strained their ears for the droning overhead, taken refuge in trenches, or sweated behind darkened windows; they do not remember the crowd that struggled into underground stations or the thudding of guns at street corners. Then, as contributory cause of indifference, there has been, on the part of pacifist associations, a definite reluctance to admit the necessity of any precautions against war, and pacifist associations have made especial efforts to rope in the younger generation. The really juvenile element in our meeting—four or five lads in their early teens—soon gave signs that the subject of air-raid precautions did not hold their interest; they began to fidget and snigger, to the general disturbance and, when one of the stewards pointed to the door, they obeyed his signal without reluctance, rose in a body and removed themselves.

The lecturer, the local organizer of precautions, gave us, unemotionally, a description of our volcano's potential activities in the way of devastation and massacre; these activities, being threefold—by incendiary bombs, by gas, and high explosive. Against high explosive, as

we know from past experience, the civilian in his home can do little by way of precaution; once the bomb is loosed we can merely hope we are out of its line of descent. As antidote to gas, there are the masks which are being manufactured by the million, and also the gas-proof room; this latter, said our lecturer, should be available in every house. Nor need expense be an obstacle to due preparation; the necessary furnishing for such a room could be bought for a few shillings only. The room need not be spacious; in a comparatively small one it would be possible for the members of a household to stay for several hours, till the raid was over and the decontamination squads had done their work—provided we did not exhaust the air by too much moving about. After gas came the turn of the incendiary bomb which, owing to its light weight, will usually get no farther than an upper floor, where it will burst into flame and have to be tackled with sand; and we were told that Germany—thorough in precaution as in everything else—has decreed that the upper floor in every house throughout the country must now and always be provided with the necessary sand. As the incendiary missile weighs only a few pounds, it can be carried by the gross in the mighty bomber of to-day; each of these products of scientific progress being capable of starting a fire. This much of comfort, however, the lecturer gave us; the incendiary bomb, if taken in time, was easier to deal with than the other engines of devilment; a suburban Borough Council had recently carried out an experiment designed to show that incendiary fires could be tackled by the ordinary householder. A bomb was exploded in one of the council's condemned houses

and the fire which duly broke out was smothered by a girl who had had no previous experience in fire-fighting. She had, however, been supplied with the necessary sand and water and instructed in the proper measures to take—and in the course of a few minutes she extinguished both the bomb and the fires it had started in the room. Less reassuring was the speaker's conviction that—spite of all pacts and arrangements to the contrary—the weapon of the air was bound to be used against civilian populations; as Japan, at the time of his lecture, was using it. Economic necessity would override all treaties and agreements; the expense of modern warfare was so vast (eight million a day we were spending in 1918) that belligerents would employ every means in their power to bring it to a speedy end. And the harrying of a helpless civilian population until, in its agony of terror and bereavement, it turned on its government and insisted that peace should be made at any price—that would be the most likely method of obtaining a victory that did not bring ruin on the victor as well as the vanquished. . . . Massacre of non-combatants, in the wars of to-morrow, will be practised as a measure of economy—interesting to think on, but not comforting! The first need of life is a measure of security—and I found myself wondering, as the lecturer talked on, whether we were about to begin the burrowing, underground stage of humanity's existence? Whether tube and mine, in years to come, may not be the site of the normal English home? With the power to rise high, in the manner of a bird, is coming the necessity to creep underground, in the manner of a mole or a beetle—and it may be the terror from the air will oblige us to house ourselves

removed from the sun! We, in England, have lived securely for so many generations that the idea that our daily surroundings—our streets and our dwellings—should be conditioned by the need for defence against an enemy is still hard for us to accept; but, strange as we find it, it would have seemed the natural arrangement to our ancestors, who, only yesterday as history goes, fortified themselves in their castles or clustered behind their city walls. Thanks to the power that science and invention have conferred on us, our interlude of comfortable safety is over and we go back to the anxious, watchful ways of our fathers; go back to the terrors and the wholesale cruelties that would have seemed impossible to the youth of my generation. We read in my youth of the savagery of bygone centuries; of the unwarned raids of Vikings who ravaged and plundered and burnt, of the pirate Moors who descended on the coasts of southern Europe and carried off their captives as slaves; read of them as old, unhappy, far-off things, that concerned us only in the pages of a history book. And lo and behold, in this our twentieth century, we are faced with a peril to life and liberty beside which the harrying of Vikings and Moors was a flea-bite! It seems to be generally accepted nowadays that the war of the future will begin without formality of declaration—begin, in the manner of a pirate raid, at any moment that seems opportune. For all the centuries that lie between us, and for all the trappings of our civilization, we are not far removed from the old barbarians whose primitive earthworks can still be traced on our hilltops. They kept ceaseless watch upon land and sea, lest an enemy strike them unawares; and, unless

the world repents and grows kindlier, we, who are heirs of all the ages, may also have to accustom ourselves to a life of the same anxious watchfulness!

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At the conclusion of the lecture the chairman announced that in a few days' time an Air Raid Precautions Exhibition would open at the town hall—sponsored by our borough and remaining open for a week. On the day of my visit the exhibition was well attended, and not only by those whose memory went back twenty years; as a method of attracting the young, it was obviously more successful than speechmaking; the type of boy that had fidgeted and sniggered in the lecture-hall was patently interested in the various exhibits. The devices for excluding gas and extinguishing outbreaks of fire—the air-locks, the blanketed doors and windows, the boxes of sand, etc. The gas-proof room was tenanted by a couple of V.A.D.'s in uniform who gave us instruction in methods of applying the precautions; in the framing of blankets as effectual shield against the entry of gas, in the closing of chinks between the floor-boards with putty or a mush of damp newspaper. They were cheerful and friendly in manner, and matter-of-fact in their teaching; they might, in their round of the gas-proof room, have been explaining the advantages of some new type of stove or convenient type of flatlet rather than precautions against horrifying forms of mass-murder. And that, for most of us, is probably the best way to look at the air peril—lest we die many times before our death! We have accepted the wonders and benefits of science, believing them a gift to humanity;

but the Moving Finger has writ that payment must be made for their use. We have eaten of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge which has made us—fallible and angry as we are—like unto gods in our power. And the chances are that—being fallible and angry—we shall use that power to forge the flaming sword whereby we shall be driven from our civilized Eden to begin the world anew. . . . But even if that be our doom in the future, it is as well to face it with matter-of-fact good courage and take such precautions as we can!

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Passing the town hall towards ten o'clock that evening I was aware of a small crowd clustered outside its main doorway; a talkative assembly, emitting a buzz that was sometimes wasplike in quality. Small as it was, it had two or three centres of interest and argument; in each case a speaker, or would-be speaker, dealing with an audience that usually included hecklers. A poster displayed with the necessary prominence by a young woman standing on the edge of the crowd explained the reason for its gathering. The latest thing in peace associations had seized the opportunity of our Air Raid Exhibition to expound its doctrine of complete non-resistance at the doors. As it was the first occasion on which I had come in contact with that particular body of pacifists, I tacked myself on to one of the groups, consisting chiefly of the lady with the poster and a massive, good-natured-looking man whom she was striving to convert to her views. Personally, I did not wonder that he remained unconverted; for, whatever may have been the case with other members of the association, she had little of new in

pacifist argument to offer. The fact that the human community is swayed by mass emotion and liable to anger was (judging by her talk) unknown to her; the blame for wars was with unscrupulous governments, unscrupulous interests—with anything except the hatreds, the needs, and the passions inherent in mankind. And when it was suggested by one of her audience that disarmament on the British part had been disappointing as to its results, she smiled, as one dealing with childlike ignorance, and assured us that our Government had never attempted real disarmament—this she could prove to us from *Hansard*. She was, I am sure, an earnest and well-meaning young woman—but earnestness without wisdom does not go very far on the road to salvation and hell is paved with good intentions. The Gospel of Peace as she expounded it did not stir me to new hope for the world.

I gathered also that the message of peace and disarmament was not over-well received by the audience for whom it was intended; persons issuing from the Air Raid Precautions display, and in many cases uncomfortably impressed by its exhibits. The female element in the crowd, I noticed, was particularly insistent on the need for protecting its homes, and I doubt if the apostles of non-resistance made many converts among it. . . . They were most of them young, these apostles—nice eager boys and girls; as inspired, no doubt, by their ideal of non-resistance as the Komsomol by his grim Red Russia or the Hitler-youth by his Germany!

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I do not know what proportion of the general public is sufficiently convinced of the danger ahead to avail itself

of the services of anti-gas instructors, provide itself with air-locks and plug up the chinks in its floors; but certain it is there is spreading through England, slowly but steadily, an understanding of what flight and its ugly developments have meant for the people of England. More, perhaps, for us than for any other nation; for we, in our island, were once protected by the sea.

When an event of world importance takes place—an event that gives a new direction to human life—its implications are not realized in full at the time; comprehensibly enough, since these implications are outside our previous experience. How many were there who foresaw at the coming of the steam-engine what the gift of its power and service would mean to mankind? How many were there who foresaw that here was an agency which, in years to come, would depopulate the countryside, overcrowd mean streets, and stimulate the growth of slums? These secondary effects of mechanical power were recognized only after time-lag; in the age of the Arkwrights, the Watts, and the Stephensons, the engine, the machine, was an instrument of progress, a bringer of wealth to mankind. The industrial slum was not dreamed of when the engine began to revolve in Lancashire and the textile mill came into being.

In the same way a later generation has taken a quarter of a century and more to realize many of the implications of the aeroplane; even after a war in which fighting in the air was a daily incident and death from the air was a terror to cities, there were those who still thought of swift transport by air as a means of bringing nations nearer together and so increasing their friendliness. That amiable delusion was more prevalent in England than it



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Above—The Coronation Scot. Below—The Ensign.

was on the continent of Europe; partly, no doubt, because England—spite Gothas over London—was still under the influence of her long tradition of invulnerability and still, for the most part, failed to understand that her Channel, for many defensive purposes, had shrunk to the dimensions of a ditch. Understanding of the shrinkage came the more slowly by reason of our over-confidence in the League of Nations experiment; and by reason, also, of that revulsion against the horrors and futilities of war—that mood of Philip sober, aghast at Philip drunk—which follows upon every long-drawn struggle and which, before now, has induced the belief that humanity has profited by bloody experience and laid aside the sword for good.¹

With the last year or two has come realization of the change in our status wrought by the power of the air; we who were islanders, trusting in our ships, have had to face the uncomfortable fact that we have lost the island advantage which, for centuries past, has preserved us from war as the nations of the Continent knew it. Wandering round England, so you keep your ears open, you will find proof enough that the fact is being faced, by the ordinary man as well as by those in authority.

¹ 'The war to end war' appears to have been fought more than once. Chateaubriand, at any rate, believed he had lived through it and saw its final episode in Waterloo. 'Napoleon,' he wrote in his *Memoirs*, 'has closed the era of the past. War can never again engross the interest of humanity—he made it on too grand a scale, a scale that can never be equalled. He shut behind him, once for all, the gates of the temple of Janus and heaped against them so great a pile of dead that never again can they reopen.' . . . There is no reason to suppose that M. de Chateaubriand, when he set down that prophecy, did so with his tongue in his cheek.

The long tradition of invulnerability has passed and we know that we live in a new, changed England, an England with the barriers down.

And the Englishman of the future, with the island tradition left out of his make-up—bereft of his comfortable sense of security—will not be entirely the son of his island fathers!

VI. BOGIES AND PACIFISTS

COMING out of Victoria, on a day in the autumn of 1937, I perceived a young man who was hawking a paper of extreme Left persuasion; its poster (in the outsize lettering that indicates importance) displayed an announcement concerning a new Fascist menace. As the young man himself was of a friendly countenance, I inquired, as I bought a copy of his paper, the nature of the danger whereby we were threatened, and learned that it was nothing more terrifying than a march by Sir Oswald Mosley and his followers from the East End of London to the Park. I expressed my relief at the comparatively harmless nature of the threat; whereupon the young man told me darkly, there would be some 'funny business' before that march was over. I ventured to suggest that if it was really desired to get rid of British Fascism lock, stock, and barrel, the best way would be to leave it severely alone—not meet it with the noisy opposition that, after all, means advertisement. The suggestion, though quite amiably received, was at once rejected. 'Maybe,' said the youth, 'but you see we get a kick out of it.'

With that frank statement—'You see we get a kick out of it'—he gave, I imagine, the real reason for most of the rows euphemistically known as 'protests.' Fascist-baiting is a species of rough-and-tumble sport and it would be a real disappointment to those who enjoy it if their persistent kicking were wholly successful and the Blackshirt army of Sir Oswald Mosley finally driven from the field.

It was partly, I think, as result of my brief conversation with the paper-seller that I decided to see something of the Fascist demonstration, and, on the advertised date, made my way to Westminster whence it was to start and march across the bridge into south London—its original route having been barred by the police. Although there was a time when I passed almost daily the headquarters of the movement, I had never yet attended one of its meetings or processions; as a feminist, its doctrines did not attract me, most of my acquaintance were strongly opposed to them and the danger of Fascism spreading in England had often been impressed on me, both in print and by word of mouth. I don't think I had ever taken these alarmist tales very seriously, partly because our British brand of Fascism had always seemed to me an imitative body—its theatrical manners and gesture of homage, which may be right enough in the country of its origin, are not the natural expression of an English faith and enthusiasm. But in spite of this not too exalted estimate, I think I had expected something more formidable than the column drawn up that Sunday afternoon between Westminster and Lambeth Bridge. I had heard the Blackshirt legions so often referred to by their enemies as thugs that I expected a predominance of the muscular type, with probably a sprinkling of the prizefighter; on the contrary, many of the marchers were weedy young men, and it struck me that the Fascist army as a whole would be all the better for a course in physical fitness. There was a contingent of women, several hundred strong—as a feminist, I noted the fact with regret—and there was also a contingent of boys, some of them quite little lads. (Their presence also

I noted with regret; the practice of dragging children into politics—cramping their mental growth by partisanship, warping their undeveloped souls with political hatred—that practice seems to me dangerous to the nation as well as disastrous to the children themselves.) Not, to my thinking, a formidable array; not the menace suggested by the poster! None of the marchers appeared to be meditating violence and—save for the reason given by the paper-seller—I could see no cause why they should not make their way through the streets of London without disturbance of the peace. Evidence of their unpopularity with a section of the public were the solid ranks of police in attendance; when the column started a hedge of constabulary enclosed it. Further testimony to the same effect was supplied by the young men who walked up and down on the pavement—among them, probably, my friend from Victoria—distributing leaflets about ‘baby-killers’; this epithet, I gathered, was applied to the following of Sir Oswald Mosley because, in the opinion of the pamphlet-distributors, they approved of the killing of babies in the Spanish war. Judging by their lack of demonstration, most of the crowd at the starting-point were there as sightseers only; but when, at long last, the procession moved off, hands were raised here and there, in the Fascist salute. These sympathizers, however, were distinctly outnumbered by those in the crowd who voiced their disapproval of Fascism, both in boos and in jeering remarks. I noticed, by the by, that the crowd-idea of insult has altered little since the early years of the century; when the women’s contingent passed us by, the jibes to which it was subjected by certain of my neighbours were the same old jibes with

which we who fought the battle of the suffrage were familiar in the days of long ago. Where were the prams, and who was looking after things at home? with the humorous suggestion that women were joining the Black-shirt ranks because they were looking out for husbands! Spite attainment of the vote and all the vote implies; spite the freedom claimed by the younger generation; the tradition that woman's place is the home and nowhere else, is evidently one that dies hard. Women walking in procession, because they are women, are still fair game for the jester.

The procession and its escort of policemen passed; and as I had seen all I wanted, and much dislike violence, I made no attempt to follow it to Bermondsey where it met, in due time, with its barricades, fisticuffs, and missiles—which are possibly a greater danger to liberty than the ranks at which they are aimed. Having seen the Mosley following massed on parade on what I suppose was an occasion of importance, and having, since then, spent several good pence on the literature of the movement, I am even less inclined than I was before to regard it as a threat to the British public or the British system of government. If Fascism is ever to gain a hold in England, it will have to make considerable change alike in its skin and its mentality.

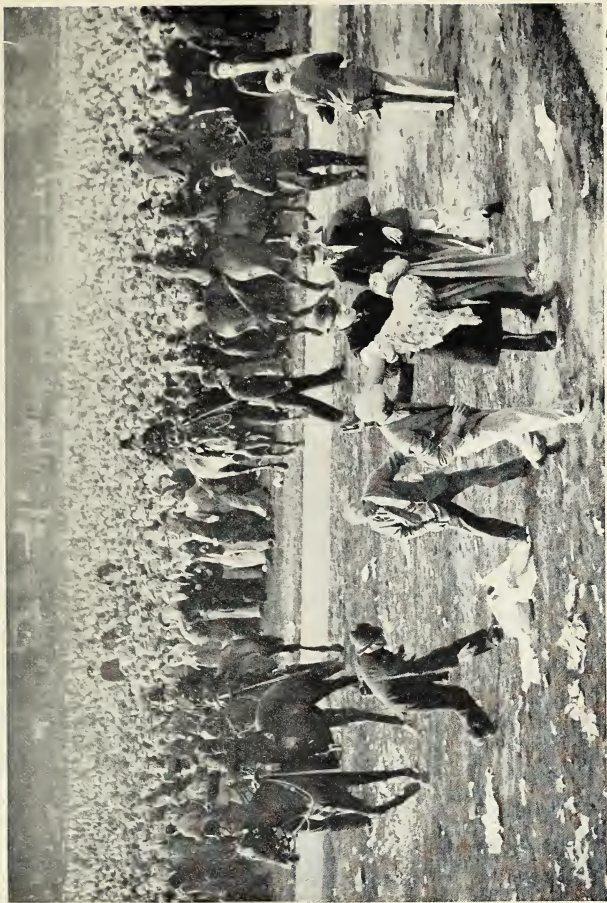
All dictatorial movements are largely run on hero-worship; they make small progress towards their goal until they have produced the type of leader who—whatever his shortcomings, vulgarities, or cruelties—can be idealized by a mass-mind. Hitler, Mussolini, Lenin, Stalin, Kemal—they have all been endowed with this power over the mass-mind; and it was for lack of such

a 'hero' to symbolize a cause that the red flag of the Spanish Government wavered back before nationalism. (While it may be only because of his absence, from Left camp as from Right, that France still remains a democracy.) So far the politician who can exercise the same magnetic power over the mind of an English democracy has yet to make his appearance; with all due deference to the present Leader of our British Fascists, I doubt his possession of that particular, essential gift. Then he made an initial, and probably irreparable, mistake when he moulded his party subserviently on the original Italian model; the plumes in which it made its appearance on the scene were so palpably borrowed from the wardrobe of Signor Mussolini. Hitler was wiser when he clad his followers in a brown uniform instead of a black and accentuated the differences between German Nazi and Italian Fascist rather than their points of resemblance. If we, in England, ever do produce a Right Wing movement based on force and strong enough to be considered a threat to our liberties, it will need to be more than a fashion imported from abroad—it will need to have an English urge behind it. And (as has been said a hundred times and more) such a movement is unlikely to come into existence except as a reaction against violence from the other extreme. That, of course, is a possibility, if a distant one; if history lies not, 'progressive' parties, wherever found, have usually been fearful of condemning violence committed by their own extremists, while denouncing the violence of 'reactionary' elements; and it is possible that this habit has helped to keep alive an organization of British Fascists which would otherwise

have given up the ghost. Unfair treatment creates a sense of grievance which makes for determination and so has survival value, and I think there can be little doubt that Sir Oswald Mosley and his following have, on occasion, been unfairly treated by sections of the public and the press; their own rowdiness widely advertised and held up to contumely, while the rowdiness of opponents who 'get a kick out of' such violent forms of pleasantries as the throwing of stones is either ignored, passed over lightly or excused on the ground of the 'provocative' nature of Fascism.

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I think it is Mr W. H. Chamberlin in his *False Utopia*—the admirable book wherein he deals with the various manifestations of dictatorship in Europe—who points out that all forms of tyranny need something to persecute; hence the tendency of tyranny, wherever found, is to select some particular group or section and attribute to it odious qualities which should render it obnoxious to the general run of good citizens. It becomes, in short, a species of bogey and, by its very existence, justifies the lust for persecution. In Germany to-day it is the Jewish race whose inherent wickedness justifies hatred in the Aryan; while Soviet Russia chose the *kulak* as its public enemy and victim. Our Fascist body, feeling the same need, also tries to make a bogey of the Children of Israel; but however viciously it may dislike them, however noisily it may denounce them, it is not in a position to start any real persecution; the Children of Israel in the British Isles are stronger by far than our Blackshirts. Left Wing extremism, on the other hand, being also a thoroughly



AN ANTI-FASCIST DEMONSTRATION IN HYDE PARK

tyrannous body, finds its special bogey in Fascism; call a man a Fascist and at once you are entitled to loathe him, even to the point of violence—as exponent of baby-killing and other refinements of ferocity!

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Several times in the week, when I take my walks abroad, I pass what is known as a Peace Shop; it purveys books and pamphlets on the madness of war and the methods of preventing its recurrence. Peace shops did not exist in the England of yesterday, neither did the League of Nations Union; there were pacifists, certainly, but not organized masses of them, and no one ever dreamed of a peace ballot. All these are modern phenomena; our preoccupation with the peace-idea is as modern as the grid or the by-pass.

As to the results of our preoccupation, they are not at present encouraging. Those of us whose memory goes back far enough to compare our England of the nineteen-thirties with England in the early years of the century must have grave doubts with regard to our progress in goodwill. We talk of peace as we never did in days gone by; but that only means that we have ceased to take it for granted. It has become a subject of perennial interest in the modern world because its continued existence is uncertain; and the energy expended in a twelvemonth in our speeches on the subject would probably suffice, if converted into horse-power, to drive the *Queen Mary* two or three times from Southampton Water to New York. But in spite of meetings from end to end of England, and the spate of peace literature that pours from the press, there is, if I mistake not, more

organized hatred in England to-day than there was before 1914. And organized hatred is the very stuff of war, liable to flare at a touch. In the years that preceded 1914 there were no such popular denunciations of Imperial Germany as are commonly directed nowadays against National Socialist Germany or the Italy ruled by Mussolini. Whatever our pacifist leagues and unions may have taught us, they have omitted one highly important lesson; the lesson, namely, that if we intend to keep the peace, we must make up our minds to live as neighbours with forms of government that do not meet with our approval. We have been told by our pacifist leagues and unions that we must lay aside our arms, but not that we must mind our manners and be careful with regard to expressions of malice and hatred. It has often been said—and in the main it is true—that we English, as a people, are not given to hatred; but there are signs that the habit of collective hatred—political hatred—is growing on us. To take a small instance which yet seems to me typical; I cannot remember, in the years before the War, any cartoonist who steadily and ceaselessly, through week after week, portrayed the ruler of any foreign nation with whom we were at peace in terms of dislike and ridicule. From time to time, when national interests clashed, an unpopular foreign ruler or statesman would be presented by English draughtsmen in a thoroughly unflattering light; but as the crisis passed and tension relaxed, the caricaturist, as a matter of course, would turn to another subject. Nowadays, however, to judge by the press, our sense of grudge is more enduring; week in, week out, a popular cartoonist does his brilliant best to increase an ill-feeling which

already is dangerous towards both the ruler of Italy and the ruler of the German Reich—thereby increasing the risk of a breach between Italy, Germany, and ourselves. A large section of our public, apparently, never tires of jeers, pictorial or otherwise, at the expense of the Nazi or the Fascist; one would have thought that pacifist associations would have been anxious to mitigate hate-propaganda of the kind, but, so far as I know, none of them have protested against it. Hate-propaganda is becoming so frequent a feature of modern English life that it shows itself even in our charities; I doubt if I ever received an appeal on behalf of the victims of the Spanish war where the message of mercy was not tinged with the bitterness of hate. All the world, I suppose, has grown more callous in the last quarter of a century and England has not escaped the general infection; it is a sober and also unpleasant fact that large sections of our public have little objection to cruelty as a policy, cruelty in itself—only to cruelty when inflicted by those they disagree with. Persons who denounce the iniquity of a Reichstag fire trial with all the energy at their command show no similar reaction to travesties of justice when committed by another dictatorship. On the contrary, their attitude towards Soviet purges and executions is often reminiscent of the heartless demeanour of Pet Marjorie's turkey, when her offspring was reft from her by violence:

But she was more than usual calm;
She did not say a single damn!

Unless my memory deceives me badly, there would have been less readiness, in the days of my youth, to shut our eyes to the evil of savagery merely because it was

perpetrated by those whose political opinions we shared. Savagery, once it was brought home to us, was abhorrent in itself, not only on account of the 'ideology' of its perpetrators. The increased callousness of the present generation is, one must suppose, one of the many ugly legacies to be traced to a four-years' war; that is to say, to a four-years' epoch where the recognized means of attaining your end was not reason or bargain but downright savagery—starvation and terror and massacre. Perhaps the chief spiritual evil of war is the inevitable conversion of those who wage it to the doctrine that the end justifies the means: twenty years ago, the peoples of the world were converted in their millions to that doctrine, and the results of their conversion are still with us. . . . Tolerance is the quality that makes for peace and good will, and I do not imagine that any one whose memory goes back far enough would claim there was more tolerance in England to-day than there was at the opening of the century.¹

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Some years ago I made the acquaintance of a woman (a Belgian, I think) whose vocation in life was the pacifist crusade and who travelled about from meeting to meeting, addressing her audiences in half the languages of Europe. I remember her telling me—telling me with conviction—that one of the most formidable obstacles to be overcome was the idea that anti-patriotism was the same thing as love of peace. That, in England as elsewhere, was a popular doctrine in the years that followed the War; not once but many times I have heard

¹ See Note B.

it assumed on pacifist platforms that nationalism is the one and only cause of collective strife, heard it taught to boys and girls who accepted it as truth—forgetful of crusades, revolutionary wars, the long struggles of Catholic and Protestant, and the urge of over-population. It was thanks, no doubt, to that limited teaching that a body of Oxford undergraduates once openly declared they would refuse to fight at the call of their king and country. Not many years have gone by since that flamboyant resolution was passed and duly applauded; but events have moved swiftly in the intervening years, and by this time, doubtless, some of those who cast their votes on the side of what they thought was pacifism will have learned that loyalty to king and country is not the only reason for which men turn and rend each other. We have been near to war since those votes were cast but not in the name of the British nation—in the name of collective security and sanctions! and it was not loyalty to their native land but belief in democracy or hatred of Fascism that sent volunteers to the Spanish International Brigade—among them men of the English race who had classed themselves as pacifists. ‘The pacifists from the English universities are said to be excellent machine-gunners’—so, from Madrid, wrote the *Manchester Guardian* correspondent. The fact that we are indifferent—or think ourselves indifferent—to the fate of the land in which we live, does not mean that we cannot be stirred to anger when our sense of justice or of pity is offended, does not mean that we cannot be stirred to enthusiasm by some cause that inspires us with new hope for humanity, some religious or political crusade. . . . We are all of us pacifists till the impulse urges us to strike!

VII. DRESS—MODERN AND OF YESTERDAY

QUEEN VICTORIA was still upon the throne when I first made acquaintance with industrial Lancashire; and, coming as I did from the south of England, I well remember my surprise at sight of the barefoot boys who were common objects of its streets. I don't know why rags and shoelessness endured so much longer in the north of England than they did in the south—perhaps Irish immigration had something to do with their persistence. But whatever the cause they did persist, and on a rainy autumn day in the eighteen-nineties when I walked out of Lime Street Station, Liverpool, I saw children with their bare feet splashed with mud, hawking the evening papers. You will look in vain for bare-legged urchins outside Lime Street Station to-day; it is a good many years, I imagine, since they vanished from the Liverpool pavements. The present-day hawkers of Liverpool newspapers are clad and shod as completely as newspaper hawkers in the Strand.

That is not the only respect in which English appearance has altered for the better since the end of the nineteenth century; all over England the standard of dress has risen. Even in districts where poverty is rife, the child of the mean street is usually adequately clad; and if one can take their dress as criterion, the majority of the English people are far more prosperous than they were in the days of my youth. Especially the women; the improvement in their appearance being due, in part,

to the cheapening both of dress material and the ready-made garment, and in part to their emancipation from the cumbrous clothing inflicted on women in the past. It is not only that our skirts are shorter than they were in times past; they are also fewer in number—gone are the petticoats that flapped round the ankle and were once considered a necessity. As no good in this world is without its drawbacks, so no evil is without its benefits—and emancipation from the cumbrous in clothing is one of the few advantageous results of a world war. It is safe to assume a connection between wholesale massacre and our post-war dress because the same tendency to curtailment of skirt and economy of material made itself manifest as result of the wars that followed on the French Revolution. The characteristic of women's dress in the early years of the nineteenth century was a brevity, a skimpiness, in striking contrast to the voluminous garments, the hoops and frills, that prevailed in the seventeen-eighties.

Diminution in the length and content of women's clothing has meant in addition to improved health and comfort an all-round raising of the dress standard, especially in the matter of cleanliness. In the day of the long skirt, liable to drag, only women who had time on their hands, or kept maids to brush their clothes, could be always and entirely free from mudstains; and among women of the hard-up classes—those who had to carry their babies and their parcels—the frayed and muddy skirt was unavoidable. Another result of curtailment of the skirt is a general neatness of stocking, unnecessary in days when it was considered undesirable for the public eye to rest upon the female leg.

The cheap garment of to-day is the mass-produced garment; which has evolved from the shoddy reach-me-down of my youth into the well-cut men's suit and neat women's costume which a clothing factory will turn out by its thousands a week. One such factory at Leeds, over which I was shown, employs nearly ten thousand hands in the manufacture of the ready-made, and its trade, I was told, is still expanding. It is these suits and costumes of more than moderate price—obtainable from one end of England to the other—that are rapidly obliterating class distinctions in dress. Thanks to mass-production in the clothing trade, it is usually impossible nowadays to place the woman you meet in a bus by her garments; while the bus-conductor who clips her ticket will dress, out of uniform, in much the same fashion as the clerical worker, the commercial traveller, or the schoolmaster.

In the clothing trade, as elsewhere, mass-production has its drawbacks; one of the chief being condemnation of the worker to monotony. To those of us whose hands and minds have not been trained to the service of mechanism, there is something repellent in its division of labour carried to extreme, its ceaseless repetition of process. To watch a girl tending a machine that sews on buttons—button after button through a whole day's work, button after button through weeks and months and years—is to look down a vista of buttons, buttons, buttons into hell! If I were given the choice of earning a good wage at buttons, buttons, buttons for all my working life or sitting as a beggar on the steps of Chartres Cathedral, I don't think I should choose the button-wage; in the beggar's trade I should at least have variety of takings—and there would be skill, real skill, in adapting my plaint to the

temperament of different passers-by. But since work in the factory, at one incessant process requiring little skill, is far more popular than domestic service, even under good conditions, we may take it for granted that the average human being does not greatly resent monotony of labour through the years; provided, of course, that sufficient variety of interest and amusement is obtainable when the hours of monotony are over. What is often forgotten by the individualist (such as myself) whose instinctive reaction to monotony is antagonistic, is the community life that grows up around the machine; the factory cricket and football teams, the classes and clubs, the dramatic and musical societies—all those give opportunities for intercourse and exercise when the day at the machine is over. Since community life is based largely on amusement, facilities for transport, canned music and the cinema have often destroyed it in the village; but to counterbalance its disappearance there, the factory, by sport and other recreations has established its communal life.

As for the advantages of mass-produced clothing—if you visit the areas known as ‘special,’ where the curse of unemployment has lain heavily and long, one of them will spring to the eye. I have visited several such areas of late and in every one of them I have looked in vain for anything approaching rags. To one small town in the north—its population something between two and three thousand—I was directed because of its complete and long-standing distress; as the slump dragged on, it had seen all its industries of mill and mine close down and there were men in the town who had drawn no wages for as long as thirteen years. Yet the fact remains that

in that broken town the appearance of the people I saw in the street was not suggestive of want; the children whom I stood at the school door to watch came running out cheerfully and, as far as I could see, were well clad and soundly shod. When money is short, footwear is the greatest difficulty; poverty, even when disguised elsewhere, is apt to betray itself in the cracks and shabbiness of shoe-leather; but it is a sober fact that, in the streets of that idle and long-distressed town, I did not see a gaping boot. In another and larger town of the same 'special' area, where unemployment, though not so extreme, was frequent and also of long standing, there was the same absence of signs of poverty in dress. As in many of our northern industrial districts, the streets, even the best of them, were mean and the shops, to a stranger, uninviting; but most of the women were clad in the usual cheap ready-made or that boon to womankind, the coloured overall—obtainable from one-and-eleven. As for the men who hung about at corners in obvious idleness, they did not appear to be any worse clad than those who were earning their wage. I should add that I have mentioned this unexpected degree of well-being in the matter of clothes to persons acquainted with the districts in question, and they agreed with me that so it was!

These distressed regions were not strange to me; in my younger days, as a touring actress, I sojourned frequently in the industrial north, sometimes for months on end—lodging, as a rule, in the working quarters of the town. And unless my memory deceives me altogether, those who dwell there to-day, and take their dole, often look more prosperous, when you meet them in the

street, than an earlier generation which drew its weekly wage from the mill, the foundry or the mine. If this comparatively high standard of dress is due, in great part, to the development of the cheap clothing industry, it must also be remembered that, where children are concerned, there is often assistance from local authority, as well as from charitable sources. It is nowadays the fashion to run down private kindness and ignore the activities of churches and associations; but these various agencies must count, and count for more than a little, in relief of unemployed hardship. In the distressed little town already spoken of, where every industry has long been closed, a good half, or perhaps the majority, of its near three thousand inhabitants belong to the Roman Catholic Church; and I was told that its parish priest—to whom I am indebted for much kindly courtesy—was renowned in the district as a beggar.¹ He himself, when I called on him, alluded to his reputation, and I took it for granted that the 'undistressed appearance of his poorer neighbours was due, in part, to his proven skill in extracting clothes and money for the benefit of local needs. Incidentally he mentioned that during the previous winter—1936-7—the product of his begging activities had been less satisfactory than usual. This drop in his takings he did not ascribe to any drying up of the fount of Christian charity; its cause was diversion of the stream of benevolence—from the 'special' areas of the north of England to Spain in the throes of civil war.

¹ Thanks largely to the immigration from Ireland, which has been a constant factor since the days of the Famine—and which shows no sign of slackening—there is a high percentage of Catholics both in Lancashire and the coast towns of Cumberland.

Unemployment is not only a disaster to those who suffer it and a drain on the resources of the country; it is also, unfortunately, a political slogan. That being so, I am well aware that my statement that the inhabitants of a 'special' area did not appear to be greatly distressed for clothing, and that its children seemed as cheerful as children elsewhere, may arouse resentment in some of those who read it. Even readers who do not dispute its correctness may feel it were better left unsaid; such, at least, was the opinion of a friend of my own who, on hearing of decent garments and sound boots, exclaimed at once: 'But you won't put that into your book?' I realized the essential kindness that prompted the query, the instinctive desire to suppress a fact which was more than inconvenient, since it might weaken sympathy for those deserving it—those denied the livelihood that comes of work and wage. But even though he sympathize with kindly impulse, the honest chronicler may not ignore his facts; and fact it is that, in such unemployed areas as I have chanced to visit, the standard of clothing has been higher than I had expected. After all, that is the purport of Public Assistance and Unemployment Insurance as well as of charitable aid—to prevent the workless from falling into misery by providing them with food and clothing! Let me add, there are many distressed areas that I have not visited—areas where conditions may be worse; and that I am well aware dress is not the only test of prosperity; good clothing may come from a house scantily furnished and cover an ill-nourished body. Let me add further, I was taught in my youth that life is more than food and the body than raiment; and that I still believe what I was taught.

In connection with this question of unemployment, the standard of dress and comfort in general, it is not always realized that a man on the dole who has a good-sized family may often have much the same purchasing power as when he is at work and drawing his regular wage. Take, for instance, the following case of a Tyne-side family—the trade of the father, ship's fireman. His pay, when in work, is £9 a month; when he is out of work, with allowances for children, he and his wife draw £2 12s. a week. That, at first hearing, sounds as if he were better off on the dole than when he is plying his trade; but to his fireman's wage of £9 a month there has to be added his keep aboard ship—the keep, that is to say, of the most expensive member of a family. Even so there will not be much difference in the household comfort between life as lived on a fireman's wage and life as lived on the dole. I do not suggest that either sum is sufficient to supply a large family with all its needs in the way of food and comfort; I am merely pointing out that the unemployment of its breadwinner does not always mean the lowering of a family's purchasing power; the amount it has to spend on food and clothing may be practically the same in its weeks of wage and dole. That is one of the drawbacks to the large family for which some of our population enthusiasts are clamouring; unless the wage-earner likes work for itself, he will have small incentive to seek it.

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Of our newer English industries one of the most flourishing must be beauty culture. It would be interesting to know the amount of capital now invested in

embellishment of the human face and figure; between massage and face-lifting treatment at one end and the array of cheap powders and creams at the other, every section of society is catered for by the trade. When in all the 'bazaar' shops, from end to end of England, the cosmetic counter is one of the best patronized, the younger generation must find it hard to believe that not so long ago a woman who appeared in the public streets with scarlet lips and blackened brows would have been taken for a prostitute on the look out for a client.

Side by side with the trade in cosmetics there flourishes the trade of the hairdresser; the curled and waved coiffure is no longer the perquisite of wealth. On the contrary, it is well within the reach of the ordinary wage-earners—and there are many such who look on it as one of life's little necessities. At Bristol, going round the Wills Tobacco Factory, I noticed how frequent was the 'perm' among the hundreds of girls there employed; since Bristol tobacco pays its workers well and steadily, it is not surprising that Bristol hairdressers should be well patronized by young women with good wages in their pockets. But, as I discovered on one of my tramps, the practice of permanent waving extends far beyond the *élite* of the factory; in a grey stone village tucked away among the Pennines—a village I had reached by an up-hill road from Teesdale—I came upon a shed at the side of the road, which, at first sight, I took for a henhouse. Seeing a paper pasted on the door, I stopped to read, and found it was a notice to the ladies of the village; informing them that a certain Miss Blank would be found at the henhouse on Friday afternoons at 5 p.m., when she would bob, shingle, marcel- or water-wave her clients.

Any ladies of the neighbourhood desirous of availing themselves of her services were requested to book their appointments beforehand with the occupant of a cottage adjacent. I read the notice with interest: a new trade this, of itinerant hairdresser, plying her craft in sheds—and likely enough a fair living to be gained at it; a trade made possible by the motor-bus traffic that gives access to districts that yesterday were isolated. Its existence suggests that the modern village maiden has more to spend on her personal adornment than she had in years gone by.

In the Lancashire towns of my younger days the mill-girl wore clogs and a shawl; you can still hear the noisy procession of clogs clattering of an early morning to the mill, but the wearers for the most part are men. As for shawls—in one Lancashire town where I put up recently for a couple of days, I doubt if I saw more than two or three, where once I should have seen them by the hundred. In some ways a pity the shawl is disappearing! it is a garment of character which can be worn individually, worn to suit any age; and I doubt if there is any other form of covering which can enwrap so cosily both a wearer and the baby on her arm. Perhaps one of the reasons it has fallen out of favour is simply that it lives too long; the good woollen shawl is a possession that will last its wearer for years. And the mill-girl of to-day does not want a garment that will last her for years; like the rest of the world, she prefers to buy cheaply and renew.

VIII. THE PASSING OF THE COUNTRY HOUSE

ATTENDANCE at conferences is a characteristic, if not of the English race in general, of the more serious section thereof—especially the serious section of the middle classes. Religious and political bodies, philanthropic ditto, youth bent on turning the world upside down, health cranks, theatrical reformers, co-operative societies—all these and many others have the habit of meeting in conference. So numerous are the associations which gather at stated intervals for a general palaver that it pays apparently to run establishments for the sole and special purpose of taking in their members and catering for their conferential wants.

One such establishment it was my lot to visit recently; a spacious building, standing in its own wide grounds and situate in one of the Home Counties—a building which, some years before, had ceased to fulfil the purpose for which it was raised. As often happens in this democratic age, the private dwelling of a country gentleman had been diverted from family to public uses; and it shelters in its present capacity a far more varied assortment of guests than it did when its owners played host to the neighbouring county. It is truly all sorts and conditions of men who arrive, confer, stay a night or two and go their ways; when I made my brief stay there the notice-board which displayed the fixtures for the summer months had a lengthy list of corporate visitors. They included—to take a few examples—the Blue Pilgrims (whatever they may be), the Royal Arsenal

Co-operative Societies, an association of Chinese students, an association of Egyptian students, the Pax Players (who combine, presumably, amateur theatricals and peacemaking), the Wives' Fellowship (which I found, on inquiry, was of war-time origin), the Theosophical Society, a section of the Y.W.C.A., an association of country dancers, and the Society for Cultural Relations with the U.S.S.R. These are specimens only, taken at random, of the miscellaneous forms of human cohesion which, during the summer and autumn months, would occupy the Conference House. A couple of days, I gathered, is the usual length of stay for the usual party, and as one conference takes its leave, another conference arrives: to distribute its members among the many bedrooms, to eat, schoolboy fashion, sitting at long tables in a dining-room which was obviously intended by its architect for a more ceremonious type of meal; and to gather in between times, in what once was the drawing-room, to lend ear to addresses and take part in corporate discussion. The popularity of the conference as an institution, may be due in part to the fact that it is not all business; as a general rule it has its holiday element—which in this instance was provided by neighbouring woods and by the park-like grounds which an earlier generation of inmates had planned for their family pleasure. The house had been built with that care for its right placing in the landscape which was characteristic of an age more leisured than our own; its model was the classic—a dignified building, grey stone and pillared front, the long windows of its drawing-room overlooking a lawn, with pasture-land and woods beyond.

When the class that created these old country houses

can no longer afford the expense of their maintenance—or when suburbs stretch onwards and encroach on their privacy—what better use can be made of them than to place them at the service of the public? Where, in times gone past, it was only a few who could enter a house such as this and enjoy its gardens, they are nowadays the temporary property of hundreds; conference after conference walks the garden and the woods, and indoors comes in contact with the art of an earlier generation! So I said to myself as I, too, walked in the garden and surveyed the house—but not, I am afraid, wholeheartedly; for, admitting the many benefits of the change of ownership, there is always to me (and I think to many others) a suggestion of melancholy in the atmosphere of buildings which have been diverted from the uses for which they were planned. Something of that melancholy no doubt is due to association with the idea of fallen fortunes and the passing of an old order; but there is also, I believe, a less sentimental, more reasonable, cause for regret. Whatever its rank in the architectural scale, a ‘diverted’ building seldom fits happily into the new activities and uses for which it was never designed. The architect of a bygone age who was commissioned to plan and build a country house thought of his work as the home of a family, the meeting-place of friends, and not as a guest-house, a museum, or a school; and the more successful he has been in designing for family comfort and dignity, the less will his work bear adaptation to public, or semi-public, uses. As a mental home, a youth hostel or a conference house, it may be more useful than when serving its original purpose, but aesthetically speaking,

there will always be something wrong with it; just as there is something aesthetically wrong with the museum-palaces—the Schönbrunn, Hermitages, Wilhelmshöhes, and Herrenhausens—that lie scattered by the dozen throughout republican Europe. They express not their present respectable function of housing collections of furniture, pictures, and the like, but a form of authority that has had its day; they are the mausoleums of extinct royal houses—splendid perhaps, but, like all mausoleums, depressing.

This passing of the country house, as such—its transformation into some form of institution—is not, of course, peculiar to post-war England; everywhere in Europe the weight of ancestral bricks and mortar has become a burden which is often too heavy to be borne. An elder generation for a time may cling to tradition, support the burden and live self-denyingly, in order that taxes may be met; but younger men, bred in a world of changed values, where freedom of movement counts for more than property, will have less mind to sacrifice their comfort for the sake of traditional pride. So acres and mansion are put up for sale; and, if accessible from London or some other large centre of population, the likelihood is that the mansion will fall to the house-breaker and the acres of parkland that once surrounded it be converted into building lots. If the place does not fall to the speculative builder, because of its distance from the busy haunts of men, it may (if too large to tempt the private purchaser) begin life anew as a country club, a school or other form of institution. Tramping in Yorkshire a few months ago, as I passed through one of the smaller market towns, my eye was caught by an

auctioneer's advertisement, prominently displayed on a wall. I stopped to read, and found that it concerned a coming sale of furniture and effects at the local 'great house'—the house itself having been disposed of by private treaty. Yesterday the heritage of a peer of the realm, it was about to follow the example of Stowe and convert itself into a boys' school.¹

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It is not only the demands of the tax-gatherer that are making it impossible for the 'county' to retain possession of its houses and estates; the domestic servant

¹ When private estates are handed over to municipal ownership the result is sometimes happy, sometimes not. Ken Wood is an example of public property honourably kept; but when last I saw the grounds of Chiswick House the accumulation of unswept litter on lawns and in shrubberies suggested that the authority responsible for upkeep takes little pride in eighteenth-century dignity. I believe it was Cobbett who first suggested that the great estates of a landed aristocracy should become semi-public property; that is to say, although taken over by the State, the owning families should not be dispossessed but remain in charge of their former property in the character of glorified caretakers. It is unlikely that the modern State would take such a step; in this democratic age no government would risk the accusation of subsidizing the rich; but if the one and only consideration were preservation of the beauty of England, the step would probably be taken. (The National Trust, by the by, has evolved a scheme on these lines.) As a general rule the best guardians of a house will be those who have inherited a love for it. If any doubt it, let him walk the grounds of Chiswick House and then pay a visit, say, to Chatsworth. There also the public are admitted—on three days a week from Easter till autumn; on Bank Holidays as many as two thousand visitors pass through the house, the charge made going to local hospitals, etc. But Chatsworth, unlike Chiswick, shows no untidy traces of its frequent invasion by the public.



L.M.S.

CHATSWORTH HOUSE

problem is even more acute in the country house than it is in the *maisonnettes* of Kensington, Marylebone, and Bayswater. The guest may be attracted by tradition and magnificence, but not so the housemaid or the cook. It was said to me by the *châtelaine* of one of the historic houses of England that, even if the owners of such houses were not dispossessed by taxation or by some revolutionary political change, the likelihood was that, before many years had passed over their heads, they would have to put up their shutters for good, for lack of a staff to run the house. Gone are the days when a rustic family would esteem itself fortunate and more than fortunate when its daughter was accepted for service in a ducal household; not even the amenities provided for the staff in the twentieth-century ducal household can overcome the prejudice against domestic service or counteract the pull of the town. One of the explanations of the modern young woman's avoidance of housework as a means of livelihood, is dislike of its frequent loneliness; and that explanation may hold good for service in the ordinary middle-class household, where it is the exception, nowadays, for more than one maid to be kept; the solitary kitchen of a flat or *maisonnette* may well mean boredom for its occupant. In the 'great house,' however, that objection cannot apply; in the Chatsworths, Hatfields, and Castle Howards there can be no lack of companionship—fellow-servants may run into dozens; but, all the same, vacancies in the domestic staff are no longer easy to fill. The girl of to-day wants more than house-companionship; the definite hours she gets in the factory or office, her evening talk and amusement with her friends; and, unless she be of unusual

mould, she prefers the lights and movement of the street to the quiet of a country lane. Then another reason—and perhaps the strongest—for refusal of domestic work, of whatever type, is the loss of prestige it entails; domestic service ranks lower in the estimation of the wage-earner than employment in the shop or the factory. For that low esteem of domestic duties the larger share of blame should be laid on the snobbery of the servant-keeping class. Perhaps one should say, the former snobbery; for the War did this good to the middle classes, that it wiped out much of the ridiculous distinction between menial and honourable duties—between work that was done by hired service and work that was done by themselves. In pre-war days, however, that distinction was hard and fast. In a family that ran to no more than one domestic, a strapping daughter would think it beneath her dignity to answer the door to a visitor—the maid had to come from the kitchen; while the boy on holiday, with time on his hands, would never think of cleaning his boots—that was only done by people who did not keep servants. Maids were often kept by hard-up families who could barely afford them for reasons that were purely snobbish—because certain work connected with the house was not done by persons with any pretensions to gentility; and the maids, well aware that their work was despised by their employers, often learned to despise it themselves. And that, I take it, is the meaning of much of the dislike in which domestic service is held. It has lost prestige—and prestige is a factor which counts in every rank of life.

When, for lack of domestic service or pressure of taxation, the owners of the great country houses of England are forced to close them or throw them on the market, the loss will fall on more than themselves and their families; the estates that will pass from their hereditary ownership, to house institutions or give place to streets and bungalows, have an importance that is historic as well as architectural and aesthetic. The mansions raised by an aristocracy in the hey-day of its wealth and political influence are part of the national heritage of England; in their way, an epitome of England's social history, an illustration, in brick, stone, and ornament, of the manner of living, the arts and tastes of our fathers.¹

Like every other class, the landed aristocracy has worked for its own interests and, like every other class, has often set its interests against those of the nation in general—it has enclosed common land, it has ruled autocratically, it has treated poaching as one of the seven deadly sins. But one service, at least, it may claim to have rendered to us all; it has preserved and increased the beauty of the land we live in; whatever sins may be laid at the door of aristocracy, England is the better to look at for its long domination of the countryside. Unfortunately, judging by present indications, there is small likelihood that democracy will follow this excellent example and bequeath the same heirloom of rural loveliness to an England of the next generation.

The country gentleman and the landowning peer have been permanent only as an institution; the families whereof their class was composed were a constantly changing factor. An old family died out and its land

¹ See Note C.

passed to others, or, becoming decadent, it was ruined by its own extravagance. But these changes meant only that new blood came into a county and perhaps into a class—with advantage. The man who had made his money in business would aspire to the prestige of a landowner and, having acquired a house and estate, would conform to the tradition of his predecessors in the district. All that happened was that the land changed hands—and the system continued as before.

To-day when property comes into the market, the likelihood is that, when it changes hands, it changes also tradition and purpose and appearance. When the estate is carved up into week-end plots; when the 'great house' becomes a country club, a mental home, a school, or a perch for a flitting attendance at conferences, there is severed the last link in the chain that bound it to its ancient feudal status. That is to say, the relationship of centuries between manor and village has ended; the relationship that began as overlord and villein and ended as squire and villager.

Within a wide and ever-growing radius of London, the successor of the country squire—and all too often the successor of the farmer—is the week-ender; who sometimes buys a cottage and adapts it to his needs, and sometimes builds him a bungalow; and in addition, there is the class of retired business man who likes to live within easy run of town and his friends. The difference between country-dwellers of this type and the squire or farmer whose property has been divided up amongst them is not only the difference between small and large owners of land; their land is different in quality as well as in quantity. It is the piece of ground

on which their house is built, their garden and tennis court laid out; it is not the soil whereby they live; nor is their property any longer of use to the nation at large, as it was when owned by a farmer. From a source of public utility it has declined to the status of a pleasure-ground for private use. The manner of life of this new country class, their outlook on the land they hold and use, is and must be different from that of the man who ploughs and reaps, or even from that of the landowner whose income is drawn from his acres. They are on the land but not of it, a people without roots, conscious of none of the duties that come of tradition and close knowledge; the product of an England that has sacrificed its fields to its factories. With every year more of England, grown 'ripe for development,' is falling into the hands of this new class of small owner—the untraditioned hands of those to whom the country means leisure, a hobby, open air, and good health. All excellent things in their way, but not the essential of livelihood! Where once was a granary, they set their herbaceous borders; where once was a duckpond, they dig a water-garden and put goldfish. Incidentally these new landowners have no community interests such as those once shared by squire and farmer and villager; they are usually a class which lives on its own level, and, when clustered in a neighbourhood in sufficient numbers, dines and plays tennis together. Some of them build good houses and cottages, toning with the landscape, and some, alas, do not! But whatever the quality of the dwellings they raise, those dwellings are outward and visible signs of the silent revolution which, within a lifetime, has taken place in much of rural England. The

silent revolution brought about in part by the resistless pressure of taxation, in part by the coming of the car.

In the countryside, as everywhere else, the power of the owner of property weakens and that of the official grows stronger. The change, no doubt, is often for the better—and to the ‘progressive’ week-ender, with no ties to the land, the passing of a patronizing squirearchy may seem all to the good; on the other hand, in case of grievance, a village Hampden who stands up to the squire is more likely to come out best in the quarrel than when he stands up to a collective enemy, like the Rural District Council or the Milk Board. There are officials nowadays whose powers are as arbitrary as any possessed by the squire in the palmy days of landlordism—and who, being officials, have not the landlord’s personal responsibility for the hardships they inflict upon others. As things are at present, the word of one of them may condemn to destruction the house in which a man lives and has invested his savings; there is no appeal from his fiat to the ordinary law of the land. And a man who is deprived of his home and property is unlikely to feel any particular glow of satisfaction because he has been ruined and turned adrift by a local official and not by a local landowner.¹

¹ ‘Property which has been declared by national and local authorities to have considerable value for rates, property tax and death duties is in the twinkling of an eye stated by some official to be completely valueless’—extract from a letter, by Mr W. B. Forshaw, which appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* of December 6, 1937. Thanks largely to the protest of Newlyn’s fisherfolk, public attention has at last been directed to the arbitrary powers of council officialdom, and the manner in which those powers have often been used for the destruction of English cottage property.

IX. THE HARD CORE OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND ITS PALLIATIVES (i)

‘THERE is a part of the problem of the unemployed which may be isolated and considered apart from the general problem of unemployment . . . a “hard core” of unemployment including about 450,000 individuals, on which trade improvement makes little perceptible impression. There is scarcely a possibility that these people will ever regain a stable place in industry. A proportion of them will be inefficients verging on the unemployable, but a great many are men in the prime of life, or a little beyond, and still physically sound.’¹

And again:

‘A recent analysis of the “live register” in the Northern Division of the Ministry of Labour showed that of the total 148,500 unemployed in the area, some 24,000 were “men over fifty who are not likely to return to work in mining areas and who will not transfer to work in other areas.” If we accept Sir W. Beveridge’s definition of “unemployment” as “a spell of unemployment between two spells of employment,” these men are not unemployed, but rather in the separate category of those who, having worked for twenty-five or thirty years, are no longer required by any industry. In their own occupation of coal-mining they are skilled workers; but once out of the pit, they are not only unskilled, but with

¹ The Labour Correspondent of *The Times* on November 6, 1934.

succeeding years of idleness less capable of even unskilled labour. By their age and experience they are unlikely to learn new trades in other parts of the country, and in their own district the demand for labour, such as it is, is almost entirely for the young.’¹

The problem of the middle-aged cast out of industry for good and all is not peculiar to our northern areas but in no part of England is it more acute. It is pointed out by the author of the above article that in districts where the proportion of the superannuated is no more than normal, their rejection by the trade to which they were bred does not always mean the end of work and wage-earning; a goodly proportion of the middle-aged and elderly will find part-time work or odd jobs. It is in areas where real distress prevails that they form a high percentage of the unemployed total; while ‘in many mining villages,’ Mr Newsom declares, ‘they represent a whole stratum of the community.’ In such districts the prospect is hopeless for these men ‘in the prime of life or a little beyond and still physically sound’; so hopeless that it is sometimes urged that the unemployment dole which they draw year after year should be frankly recognized for what it is—a permanent necessity, a life obligation—and transformed into a payment on the lines of the Old Age Pension. The change over to a pension would not mean an increase of the weekly income, and would have to be accompanied by means test precautions; but it would relieve the superannuated of the formality of applying for work they will never

¹ *A Policy for the Special Areas*, by John Newsom. First published in the *Nineteenth Century and After* for February 1937 and later issued as a pamphlet.

obtain and put an end to their lining-up for the dole—which many intensely dislike. ‘The dole queue’ (I still quote Mr Newsom) ‘is humiliating to the sensitive, and especially to men who often hold positions of some local importance and who are acutely conscious of their situation.’ In addition, the change over from dole to pension would remove these ‘hard core’ cases from the ‘live register’ of unemployment and so make it far more reliable than it is at present. . . . Such, at least, are the arguments of those who favour the change.

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Most of the attempts to deal with this problem of the middle-aged workless have been directed towards communal labour on the land. In Durham, for instance, under the auspices of the Land Settlement Association, there are group holdings where twenty men, working five or six acres of market garden and poultry-run, ‘can make 7s. 6d. to 10s. a week, either in cash or in vegetables, etc., for their own consumption. . . . Seventy groups are in being and the men have not only a healthy outdoor occupation but have brought their standard of living up to, and even above, the level which they enjoyed as miners.’ Although they are technically under the supervision of the Agricultural Department of the County Council, the holdings are really run by the men themselves, who make their own group purchases and sales. Mr Newsom is convinced that, even in Durham, these holdings could be multiplied many times over, absorbing a large proportion of the elder unemployed, and he insists, further, that they are one of the cheapest forms of help, costing but a fraction of the settling of

a family elsewhere 'There is no necessity to move men from their native villages, no need to build new houses'—as has to be done when a family is migrated to one of the Land Settlement Association estates in another part of the country.

The Land Settlement Association is not the only body which is tackling the problem of middle-aged worklessness by means of the communal holding; and, thanks to the courtesy of those in charge, I was able to see something of group-holding methods as practised, on a larger scale than in Durham, in the neighbouring county of Lancashire. An organization entitled Subsistence Production (which itself is a product of An Order of Friends) has taken over several farms in the neighbourhood of Wigan; a district where miners and others who have reached middle age are unlikely to find re-employment.¹

¹ An Order of Friends, as its name denotes, is an outcome of the Society of Friends, and the official account of its beginnings is as follows. 'During the years 1926-8 small groups of young Friends and others, who had a conviction that the basis of life was spiritual, felt concerned to share this conviction with others. They visited many parts of the country, holding meetings in the open air, at street corners and in market-places. . . . In the spring of 1928 South Wales was visited for the first time in this work. Here poverty and distress seemed to be so much worse than had yet been realized, that the group felt that something must be done. Going back to London the concern was placed before the Society of Friends' and 'several members of the original group returned to South Wales, settling down at Brynmawr, organizing relief work. . . .' As a result of work in fellowship, the Order of Friends was formed—at first with only four members. Upon those who join it, it makes considerable demands. 'The membership in the Order consists of those who are able to give themselves wholly to its work. There are no salaries: members are paid from the funds available to the Order an allowance on a basis of needs, and those joining the Order

The upward trend of the nation's trade has brought about some measure of betterment in Wigan but there is need of much more before it returns to well-being. It was on a Thursday afternoon that I took my seat in a bus for Ashfield Hall, the local headquarters of Subsistence Production; and Thursday—my bus-conductor told me—was the busy day of Wigan's week; so many people came in from round about to draw their dole at the Exchange. It so happened, that morning, that having inquiries to make at the Labour Exchange, I had watched the long line of the unemployed filing to the counter and taking up their money—and I could well believe that their numbers added to the traffic of the streets and the business of the cheaper shops.

Ashfield House is one of five settlements in the neighbourhood of Wigan; it was formerly a country house and in that capacity must have been desirable; at present, as headquarters, it contains the offices of the organization. It stands well away from Wigan, in fifty acres of surrounding land, including gardens now used for recreation—bowls, cricket, and the like. Between work

who have resources would contribute to the funds of the Order any surplus above their needs.

'The Order is under the guidance of a Leader appointed by the members. The work of the Order is discussed in meetings of the members, and their views are taken on all important decisions.'

It should be noted, however, that public funds, as well as private generosity, have gone to the foundation and upkeep of Subsistence Production; and a report of the Order acknowledges gratefully the help received from the Commissioner for the Special Areas.

The actual scheme of Subsistence Production, as practised in Lancashire and the South Wales area originated with Mr Peter Scott, who is still its guiding spirit.

on the land and workshop developments it is hoped, in time, to employ there as many as three hundred men.

Here it must be explained—lest the term ‘employment’ be misunderstood!—that in none of these Subsistence Production colonies are the men employed in the wage-earning sense—they receive no payment in cash; where cash is concerned, the dole is still their source of income. Where they benefit financially is by the fact that they are able to purchase the products of their various farms and workshops at a price substantially lower than the ordinary tradesman would ask; as they themselves provide the labour, the usual cost of labour is eliminated when it comes to the settling of accounts. Their dole, in short, is worth more to them, thanks to their work; though its nominal value remains the same, its real value has increased. It did not surprise me to learn that one of the initial difficulties with which the promoters of the scheme had had to contend was unwillingness to work without a money wage—an unwillingness which may have been motivated, in part, by remembrance of bygone ‘truck’ abuses. Personally, I should imagine that, for men who live in towns, this practice of dealing in goods directly—not through the intervention of the token called ‘money’—is an excellent educative influence. The values of men who live and work in towns are practically always token-values; they think in terms of pounds, shillings, and pence, hardly ever in the values these tokens represent, the real values of things grown and made. The members of Subsistence Production colonies must be learning to think in terms of commodities—garden produce, garments, books, and milk—instead of in terms of mere cash.

I discovered, however, that it is not only through the cheapened price of the goods they have grown and manufactured that members of the group obtain advantage; they benefit also by a system of co-operative buying. Certain goods which they themselves do not produce—*butcher's meat*, for instance—are purchased in bulk and retailed to the community at a price which merely covers its cost. It must be realized that Subsistence Production does not aim at becoming an economic enterprise. There is no intention of ultimate profit-making for any one, nor is there any probability that members of the groups will ever become self-supporting. They will continue to need their allowance from the public purse and, in all likelihood, to the same extent as before. But they will not (if they stick to their work) decline into mere useless *dole-takers* and accept the verdict which condemns them to a premature idleness. It is their own fault if they do not benefit in health of body and of mind.

In the beginning the intention was that the payment, in kind, due to individuals should be reckoned on what may be described as a *cash-hour basis*; in return for so many hours of labour, a man was credited with so many *shillings' or pounds' worth* of commodities, and was entitled to draw that amount from the common store—in food or products of the workshops. That system, however, was discarded after trial had been made; one reason for its rejection being that it entailed a form of book-keeping that was not only highly complicated but entirely new. When I asked what was now the test of a man's efficiency—and therefore of his right to draw from the common fund—I was told there was no actual

test; his approval, or otherwise, was left to the group of which he was a member; if he slacked at his job, it was for those who worked with him to object. So long as they considered that he pulled his weight and did a fair day's work in the common interest, he would be entitled to share the common benefit and buy goods the community provided at rates below the market price.

It must not be thought that expansion of the purchasing power of the dole is the only benefit resulting from membership of a Subsistence Production group; another advantage is the quality of some of the produce supplied to the men and their families—for instance, the milk and eggs. There is, besides, value in the way of recreation; games are encouraged—a good many of the members play cricket and at Ashfield House there is a bowling-green, well patronized on the evening I was there. Then two meals a day are served at the various centres; for the midday dinner a charge of a few pence is made, but tea is gratuitous—and as I shared that tea on one occasion, I know that it is served with generosity. Only one of the five farms included in the colony is close enough to Wigan to be described as adjoining, while one of the others—the largest—is distant a good five miles. As most of the men come from Wigan streets, it follows that a transport system is necessary, and buses for the journey to and fro are provided by the institution.

This Lancashire adventure in Subsistence Production dates only from 1934. In the spring of that year at the farm of Upholland, situated two or three miles from Wigan, seven acres of land, with some old farm buildings, were obtained on a short lease—and, defying the tradi-

tion of unlucky numbers, thirteen out-of-works came in to try the new experiment.¹

Concerning these beginnings of the scheme at Upholland, the official recorder writes as follows:

‘The limited resources, both in men and materials, curtailed to some extent the variety of products, but potatoes and other vegetables soon appeared on the plot, and a small greenhouse was built for tomatoes. The farm buildings, in spite of their limitations, were adapted not only to house pigs and to accommodate a dairy, but also to find space for trades not usually associated with agricultural and horticultural enterprise. In one room were made those commodities, indispensable to Lancashire but inconceivable to the rest of the world, namely “clogs.” Another part of the building was devoted on the ground floor to woodworking, and on the floor above to tailoring. All available space was occupied and yet,

¹ One of the serious obstacles which had to be overcome when Subsistence Production made its beginnings was mistrust on the part of those whom the scheme was intended to benefit. ‘In Lancashire,’ writes the chronicler of the Order of Friends, ‘opposition was mingled with doubt and distrust, with caution and criticism. In South Wales the scheme was confronted with opposition of a more bitter character, with suspicion and with misrepresentation. Men joining the scheme were in danger of being ostracized by their neighbours. Progress at first was painfully slow, but the few who joined at the commencement were such as laid a good foundation and others soon began to follow their example.’ In the report from whose pages I have quoted, it is suggested that the history, nationality, and temperament of the Welsh miner may have accounted for the greater bitterness of his opposition to the scheme. In all likelihood the hold of class-war doctrine on the Welsh miner was also, in part, accountable; it is natural, in any form of warfare, to fear the Greeks and their gifts.

at a later date, when soft fruits grown on the plot had ripened, a miniature "factory" secured a footing in one corner and, with the aid of a primus stove, produced large quantities of excellent jam.'

Such were the beginnings, the modest beginnings, of the Lancashire scheme of Subsistence Production. Two or three years later in Upholland itself the thirteen men had increased to fifty and the acres from seven to twelve. 'Another tomato-house has been erected. Ducks, geese, and poultry are kept' and 'the small workshop element, including tailoring, clog-making, cobbling, butchery, woodworking, and bacon-curing has been developed a little further. Cooked meats and pickles and jams have also been included in the price list!' And Upholland to-day is the smallest of the five settlements run by Subsistence Production in the neighbourhood of Wigan. The largest of the five, Parbold by name, extends to three hundred acres; the chief activity there is the dairy—the production and distribution of milk under hygienic conditions and with modern machinery. 'Graded and tested milk is delivered daily to the homes of all the men in the unit.'

It was while on the topic of milk delivery that I asked what was done in the case of a glut—any superfluity of dairy or vegetable produce that the members of the unit could not themselves consume. The answer was that, as elsewhere, the superfluous commodity was destroyed; there was no question of competing with the ordinary market.

In the published account of the activities of the Order of Friends, it is noted that 'This question of milk production under the best possible conditions was of para-



Manchester Guardian

'SUBSISTENCE PRODUCTION'
Visit of the Queen (as Duchess of York)

mount importance. Probably no other factor had so contributed to the improved physical condition of the men and their families as the supply of high-grade milk with its full yield of cream. Wives and mothers, formerly in the habit of purchasing tinned milk in small quantities, are now able to obtain fresh milk, delivered "in their own vans from their own farms."

Hardly needful to state that Wigan ex-miners did not attain to the running of dairies and kitchen gardens untaught—the highly skilled work of a farm could not be brought to success by the unaided amateur townsman. At the head of agricultural operations there is a practical farmer, with assistants capable of giving the necessary guidance. To be noted, also, that apart from this matter of professional guidance, the Order of Friends believes strongly in the need of individual leadership as well as of group control—adding, however, that the leader must be 'a person chosen by the group and maintaining his position only so long as he holds their confidence.'

It so happened that the day of my first visit to the settlement coincided with a meeting of the Central Committee; this was a piece of good fortune for me as, at the suggestion of the 'leader,' the members allowed me to be present at the meeting and so gain some insight into their methods of self-government. The committee consists of several delegates from each of the five farms and local members of the Order of Friends who meet at intervals to discuss results and plans, common policy and business. Here it should be marked that the vote is ruled out as a means of arriving at decisions; there is discussion of a subject till the general opinion is made perfectly clear—but no voting.

On this particular occasion, the first item on the agenda was 'arrangements for harvest work'; and the discussion of that item—the lengthy discussion—bore witness not only to the thoroughness with which matters of business were gone into with the members but to the difficulty of inducing the townsman to think in terms of the field. Parbold, with its three hundred acres, had a hay-harvest ready for cutting and, a change of weather being feared, it was advisable to take advantage of the fact and carry it during the week-end. This the Parbold workers were prepared to do but could only manage it with extra help from the other groups—and the question was, would that extra help be forthcoming? Volunteers had already been asked for, but so far there had been no response. Of the hundred or so men employed on the Ashfield Hall estate who had been approached on the subject when they knocked off work on the preceding afternoon, not one had offered his assistance. The fact, baldly stated, suggests a laziness or lack of good fellowship which augurs badly for the success of an enterprise based on group work and understanding; but to leave it at bald statement would be to give a wrong impression and do far less than justice to the men who failed to volunteer. Why they turned a deaf ear to the suggestion of an extra few hours, for the good of their fellows, was because they were asked for it on a Saturday afternoon—which, by all the rules of their working life, was a holiday. Most of these men, in their wage-earning days, had been miners, and the man who earns his living underground is independent of wind and rain and sun—weather conditions have no effect upon his trade. Those who were not of the mining fraternity had presumably

worked at urban callings—in factories or the like—where, also, no difference to a man's output is made by rain or shine. . . . And there you were, with your hay to be carried before the weather changed, faced by men who had worked by clock and not by sun, they and their fathers before them; and whose tradition concerning the Saturday holiday was as sacred as the ancient law of Medes and Persians. At the back of their minds (said one who knew them well) was an idea that it would be disloyal to their class to consent to a lengthening of their weekly tale of hours and yielding of Saturday freedom.

Be that as it may, there was general unwillingness to face the fact of Nature's indifference to industrial regulation and week-end custom; and as opposing argument dragged itself along, one realized that, as regards conservatism of habit and outlook, the townsman could sometimes run the countryman hard. Here again, lest a false impression be given, I hasten to add that the expression of urban conservatism was throughout moderate; though at times resistance to the innovation was stubborn, it was never stubbornly expressed. The spokesman for one little company of delegates announced bluntly that their unit didn't work on Saturdays; but the announcement, though bluntly put, did not sound discourteous. As for those on whom devolved the duty of persuasion, and likewise of getting in the hay before it rained, their patient method of advancing argument and the good-natured sanity they opposed to prejudice—all I can say is, it aroused my respectful admiration. When one member murmured something about 'compulsion,' the answer came back good-naturedly: 'There's

no compulsion from us—it's only from the weather.' Finally it was made clear to the men that, as harvests were not of everyday occurrence, calls for harvest help would be very occasional and that if a sufficient number would signify their readiness for overtime work, it would not be necessary to call on any member to give up more than one Saturday during the summer. Thereupon the meeting—at any rate in principle—gave a somewhat reluctant approval. (Incidentally I noticed, during the argument, that 'dictator' is coming into use as a word of reproach; for instance, the group desirous of help with its hay-crop were described by some of the objecting delegates as 'dictators'.)

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In the working of Subsistence Production there is no backsliding from the 'group' principle of equality of reward; no member, by reason of his greater industry or superior skill, gains any material advantage over his fellows—the sturdiest of Stakhanovs is entitled to no more from the common fund than the man who just gets through his quota. The good citizen, no doubt, will give of his best without prompting; while the natural objection of the rest of the group to take upon themselves the duties that a shirker has left undone will presumably act as a check upon the shirker's laziness. The object of the Order of Friends is avowedly more than assistance to men thrown out of work; it aims at creation of a sense of membership, a conscious life of the group. And here let me frankly admit that I have my doubts as to whether, when it comes to productive work, the sense of membership will prove a satisfactory

and lasting substitute for the sense of individual responsibility and the hope of individual reward. It is a fact we are most of us slow to recognize that the activities of the community are most effective in what may be defined as the negative sphere of human life; in political agitation, in strikes, in war—that is to say in the works and ways of destruction. The community sense—comradeship, brotherhood—is never so strongly felt as in war or revolution, when the brethren are banded together to destroy, and the comrades fall upon those who are not comrades. Creation—initiative—is usually the outcome of the individual mind, never of more than two or three; when a larger group works effectively for non-destructive purposes, it works not spontaneously but to the plan and order of the one.¹

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¹ In this connection I have cited more than once a poster issued by the German Government in the lean and hungry months that followed on the War; its object, to urge the tillers of the soil to their utmost effort—that their needy country might be fed. The poster represented a field wherein a man was driving his plough—one man, be it noted, not a fellowship of farmers—and it bore two legends. The first was a simple and direct appeal: *Farmer, help, or the towns will starve!* The second, a quotation from a ballad by Goethe, familiar to every German child; it tells the story of a lazy peasant, neglectful of his field, who, on hearing that gold was buried beneath it, set to work and dug it, and found gold in the shape of a crop. There the appeal was to the farmer's material advantage—his industry would fill his purse; while in the first instance not his pocket but his conscience was appealed to; if he failed to do his utmost—to grow every sheaf of corn that his land could produce—there would be starvation he, personally, might have averted. The appeal to personal responsibility and the appeal to personal gain: these, in all ages, have been the most effective spur to the efforts

An inevitable handicap in all undertakings for the benefit of the unemployed is that those who drop out are often the best workers—because it is the best workers who are likely to return to wage-earning. Then in group-work—so I was told, and I can well believe it—there is apt to develop a suspicion on the part of one group or section that the others are not pulling their weight; and distrust of one's fellows tends to destroy the good will that makes for good work. But whether or no these group-experiments in land-work succeed, this at least is certain: they are experiments that should be made, and not only in the interest of their present members—their success would be a matter of importance to the nation at large. If science and invention continue to serve us as they have done in the past, diminishing the need for human skill and experience, the problem of the man unemployed at middle age is not likely to grow less acute in the immediate future. And this particular undertaking of Subsistence Production is conceived in the right spirit; the Order that has brought it into being 'believes strongly that radical and lasting changes can only be achieved through open-minded experiment, in which ideals are constantly put to the test and the realization of them postponed if premature, or totally abandoned if found impracticable.'

As to whether this scheme of Subsistence Production will, after due trial, be judged premature or impracticable,

of our poor humanity. For a time, inspired by some fanatical faith, a group may be tireless in self-sacrificing labour for the common ideal and benefit; but in the end (as the rulers of the Soviet Union have realized) faith is bound to lose something of its goading power and the urge to self-sacrifice lessens.

I do not know enough to prophesy; but to the eye of the visitor it does not look like failure and those who should know are confident that the spirit of membership is growing. Its initial cost in money has no doubt been heavy; but it looks for its return through an added wealth of men's lives. Lest that statement give the impression that the undertaking runs regardless of expense, I should add that at the committee meeting at which I was present the costings of various products and purchases were carefully explained to the delegates present; and I realized that the need for efficiency on the part of members, in order that expenses should be kept down, was not allowed to be forgotten.

X. *THE HARD CORE OF UNEMPLOYMENT* (ii)

LAND SETTLEMENT

I MAKE no excuse for devoting another chapter to those elder Englishmen who are cast out of industry in the fullness of their skill and experience; their problem is not likely to grow less acute as time goes on, with the ever-growing perfection of machinery and the effort of nation after nation to live on its own resources. Admittedly youth is to-day all-important; still it is, or or should be, a time of preparation for maturity; and if maturity lapses into useless idleness, some at least of the energy which educationists, psychologists, and dietists devote to youth must be accounted waste. Also, the Land Settlement Association, of whose work I shall try to give some idea, does not deal with the problem on the same lines as the Order of Friends, with its scheme of Subsistence Production. There is this resemblance between the Association and the Order: the one, like the other, brings the unemployed townsman to the land. But whereas Subsistence Production, as already explained, is an undertaking for the benefit of men who are, and will always remain, on the dole, Land Settlement policy, on the other hand, aims at turning the ex-wage-earner into a smallholder, who lives by the produce of his land and labour and not by his weekly dole. Both schemes, it is true, are worked in groups; but while Subsistence

Production seeks to create the group sense of membership as substitute for the urge of personal gain, there is no such attempt in connection with Land Settlement. The smallholder there is one of a group, but only as member of an institution for co-operative selling and buying.

The smallholder, left to his own resources, labours under many disadvantages; because his purchases are few and small in quantity, he will have to buy them at a higher price than the man who buys in bulk—and with whom, when it comes to the selling of his produce, he has to compete in the market. To put it briefly, he sells at wholesale price and is usually compelled to buy at retail—which explains the failure of so many smallholders to make a living from their land. Then the man who cultivates his acres 'on his own' must be more than an industrious and skilled agriculturist; he needs, in addition, to be something of a business man, knowing how and when to sell his produce. And that means the attainment of a varied knowledge, unguessed at by those who earn their living in a factory by the ceaseless repetition of one process!

To expect an ex-miner or ex-riveter, whose income has hitherto reached him in the definite and regular form of wage, to acquire instant skill in the trading of his produce, as well as in the raising of it, is to court disaster in all but exceptional cases; and it was realization of this fact that a few years ago (in 1934) brought into being the Land Settlement Association—its object, 'to carry out an experimental scheme for the provision of small holdings for unemployed persons.' It was planned to create two distinct types of holding; of these

one type—the group holding which provides part-time occupation for the unemployed or partially employed—has already been mentioned at the opening of the last chapter. The other type is a matter of full-time occupation—that is to say, of livelihood for a man, his wife, and children. Such holdings, varying from three to ten acres, are provided with a dwelling-house and equipped for the production of market-garden produce, pigs, and poultry.

In the beginning the aims of the association were modest; a few schemes of settlement on suitable land, to be financed in part by public subscription, in part by a promised contribution from the Government; but with the appointment of the Commissioner for Special Areas the scope of the work extended, and funds were supplied to the association for the settlement, in village communities, of families from the workless north. In the two or three years of its active existence the association has brought many such village communities into being—they dot the country from Cumberland to Sussex and Hampshire. Round one of these new villages, on a soft day in winter, I tramped my way in the company of its warden—the official whose knowledge of agriculture and the marketing process is the first need of a settlement. With that knowledge he must also combine a faculty for dealing with men; for (as a writer on the scheme points out), ‘the most perfect organization of production and marketing would fail utterly if the men and their families were not made content, and their interest and confidence harnessed to the daily work.’

The community I visited is settled a few miles from Cambridge, on the good land bequeathed by the fen; but its inhabitants, largely if not entirely, are drawn

from Durham, the county of derelict industries. And in this connection it has to be remembered that the men who are to be interested and encouraged to success come to their work with minds and bodies that have lost the elasticity of youth and in many cases have been slackened by years of unemployment. Here I cannot do better than quote from one of the annual reports on Land Settlement:

‘It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the task upon which the association is engaged is unlike any other previously attempted in Great Britain. It is not only to create small holdings. If the association were free to choose its tenants from any part of the country, its work might be simpler; given tenants with experience of the land, it could concentrate upon problems of agriculture and marketing and leave the men for the most part to look after themselves. But it is not so free. Its field of recruitment is strictly limited. It can draw its tenants only from the ranks of the unemployed in industrial centres, many of them having been continuously idle for four, five, or more years, and having lost in consequence the art of steady work and acquired instead a dependence on outside relief.

‘Such a background presents serious obstacles to land settlement in the ordinary sense. It is true that considerable numbers of the men have had experience of allotments. But for the great majority it may fairly be said that the association has to provide not only a house and five acres but a new mode of living altogether. Where previously they had nothing to do, they must now work strenuously throughout the week; where once they relied upon others, they must now become

self-supporting; where, almost invariably, they lived in streets with many neighbours and enjoyed the amenities and diversions of urban life, they must now occupy a house separated perhaps by hundreds of yards from the next house, in a comparative solitude that offers neither noise nor bustle, shops, nor picture-houses. To bring about so great a change and make of the families contented, prosperous, and independent countrymen, is an undertaking which causes constant concern to those responsible for its direction.

‘For, not unnaturally, the men are full of doubts. Is the offer real? Can it be possible that after six years “on the dole” somebody comes along with a genuine proposal of work? Is there not a catch in it?

‘When the plunge is taken and the trainee has begun his course—is he ever to get the hang of the job? Was he not a fool to have left his wife and family for this strange life? Bad and all as it was, there was security on the dole—what will happen here when the dole ends?

‘When he has been joined by his family and his wife misses the familiar sounds and services of her old home—will she ever get accustomed to the change? Was he wise to have risked his own and her happiness?

‘And at the moment when he is about to assume tenancy of his holding, his claim to unemployment assistance gone and the murmurs of the pessimist on the next holding in his ears—can he really make a living out of it? What if the price of pigs falls and the poultry market slumps? What if a bad season comes and his capital runs out? What was it Professor Somebody said on the wireless the other night about small holdings being uneconomical? What if . . . ?

'These are not imaginary questions; they are heard on every estate, on the lips of every fresh group of men who arrive. They reflect real doubts which are wholly natural to the type of men involved. . . .' And the report goes on to say that it was in order to meet the needs of such men that the association has worked out its methods of organization and settlement.

This Cambridge settlement is one of the larger ventures of the association, planned for the maintenance of no fewer than fifty-four families; each family provided, in addition to its holding, with its own dwelling-house. Which is sometimes detached, sometimes semi-detached, but always built on good modern lines, with bathroom and a cupboard for the drying of household linen. The detached, single house, I gathered, was the type my guide thought preferable; semi-detached families, living in close contact, do not always get on with each other. When I asked about men who fail to make good, he said that the wife is sometimes the cause; the man may be fitted for his work and have a liking for it, but the woman, removed from her familiar surroundings, may fail to adapt herself to country ways and country needs. This, however, is by no means the rule; the two or three settlement ladies upon whom, at the warden's suggestion, I ventured to call, and who were good enough to show me over their houses, seemed content with their quarters (as well they might be) and happy in their way of life.¹ In one instance a good-looking woman in

¹ I was told by one of the officials of the association that it is not uncommon for the mother of the family to arrive at her new home more worn than she realizes by the long ordeal of her husband's unemployment. During those years she has had to carry on her work

corduroy breeches, whose husband had once been the pay-clerk of a colliery, was working beside him at their lettuce-bed; she loved the work, she told me, and evidently took a good share in it. But for the most part, I gathered, the women of the colony do not take as much part as they might in the outdoor work of the holding; in times of urgency like the fruit-picking season they lend their husbands a hand, but usually stick to housework. This is not to be wondered at, considering the districts whence most of them come; family work on the farm is a 'peasant proprietor' tradition which may take time to establish itself. In the nature of things the tradition must be strange to the wife of a miner or shipyard worker, whose husband's trade has always been apart from the home.

To turn a man bred to the mine or the factory into a tiller of the soil and breeder of stock requires considerable training, and the would-be smallholders, before they are accepted as tenants of the association, receive expert instruction from the warden and other officials of their settlement. Needless to say, the men are carefully selected in the first place—by local officers of the Ministry of Labour and by representatives of the association itself; the verdict being based not only on the fitness of the applicant himself but also on that of his wife. Being accepted, the candidate is sent off to his settlement

as usual—with the added difficulty of spreading out the dole to cover all the needs of the family. It is obvious that, even in favourable circumstances, the move and new start will be a heavy strain on the energies of a woman who has lived through years of anxiety. It should be added that, since the difficulty has been recognized, special efforts have been made to meet it.

where, for the time being, he is boarded and lodged with other trainees; the full period of training is reckoned at fifteen months, but at the end of three, if he prove satisfactory, his family may join him and a house will be placed at their disposal. Fifteen months' training does not, of course, suffice to make of the novice an expert market-gardener; but given aptitude, industry, and guidance from those more skilled than himself, it should enable a man to run his holding with success. At the end of the fifteen months of training—before the granting of a permanent tenancy—each case is again reviewed; and if the applicant's record justifies acceptance, he becomes the permanent tenant of a comfortable dwelling-house and well-stocked holding—for which he pays rent and a charge for amortization.¹ From that day on, he is his own master—but, by that fact, no longer eligible for the dole. A fact which, no doubt, often gives him pause before he takes the final step! It is, be it noted, a condition of his tenancy that his buying and selling shall be done co-operatively, through the Central Farm of the settlement; which is not so much a farm as a service department, doing for the many and various tenants what no one of them could do for himself. The produce of the holdings is assembled in its sheds, to be graded and packed and finally dispatched to its markets. It is the general storehouse of the

¹ 'The trainees being entirely without funds, the whole amount is advanced by the association on easy terms of repayment. The average holding requires altogether about £1,000 to establish. Of this at least £700, representing land and dwelling-house, can properly be regarded as a permanent asset upon which a fair rent and a charge for amortization are paid by the tenant.'—Extract from Report.

community; it provides transport and rears chickens and pigs for distribution to the holdings as required. In short, it secures to the smallholder the advantage he usually lacks: the business method and organization which enables him to compete with farming on a large scale.

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Odd bits of information I picked up on my round of the holdings; for instance, that pigs are more popular with the settlers than fowls. In their fowls some are apt to lose interest after a time, but there is no lack of interest in the piggery. Since a market-garden holding is no place for cows and milk has to be bought from the neighbouring farmers, a good many families invest in a goat, and thereby keep down their milk bill.

Spite the most careful selection there are bound to be failures, but the proportion is by no means high. Sometimes the cause is unavoidable; an unaccustomed man may find the work beyond his strength or his wife may break down in health. While now and again a man who has been softened and slackened by his idleness will throw up the sponge when it comes to hard work, and frankly admit he prefers his life on the dole. But the failure, from whatever cause arising, as a rule declares itself in the early months of the experiment, before time and money have been wasted to no purpose; once a family has really settled in and got going, there is seldom a desire to withdraw.

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I have thought it worth while to describe in some detail these two systems of Land Settlement and Sub-



Bristol Evening World

A SHEEP-DOG TRIAL IN SOMERSET

sistence Production. In part because (as I said above) they deal with a hardship which is not likely to decrease; and in part because they stand for two different methods of bringing the townsman to the land. Two different methods and likewise two different principles. Subsistence Production means the collective farm; run on kindlier lines than in the land that invented it, but worked by its members without personal profit for the general good of the community. The land settler, on the other hand, works individually, seeking to make profit for himself and his family and co-operating with the rest of the community only for his trading advantage. . . . Apart from the aid they give to those in need, it will be of value to the nation to compare the outcome of these two contrasting experiments. . . .

Driving back to Cambridge I found myself wishing that the population alarmists, whose nightmare it is that the young will ere long be outnumbered by their elders, would make it convenient to call in at some of these settlements. For there they would find men cast out of industry by reason of their years—men who have no prospect of employment at a wage—doing the hard and weatherbeaten work that the youngsters of to-day decline.

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It was a day or so after my visit to the Land Settlement village that I took motor-bus at Ely and drove out into the Fen country which the great church dominates for miles; a flat Fen country which seems to have changed less than most parts of England since the days when Victoria was queen. Fewer windmills, no doubt, than forty years ago, and here and there a batch of

'council' dwellings; but on the whole the housing of the district is of yesterday; the yesterday of the nineteenth century, which built in yellow-grey brick and a somewhat box-like formation. And that, may be, is one of the reasons why many of the villages remain as they were; they have little in the way of picturesque cottages or picturesque surroundings to offer to the weekend townsman. A sweep of flat country has its own beauty, more especially of sunset, cloud and sky, but it is not of a type that encourages the erection of the villa residence or brings along those who make holiday. This is an England of black-soiled fields, straight roads and great plodding horses; an England unmechanical, save for, here and there, the chimneys of the pumping-stations—successors to the windmill—without whose aid the Fen would come back into its own. How real is that danger was shown by the floods of a year or two back; which have necessitated the raising of yet new defences against the waters of the earth.

What this region of England was like till three centuries ago—in the days when it was Fen not only in name but in fact—can still, to a certain extent, be guessed at from the one little corner that is left as uncultivated wild; Wicken Fen, which the National Trust has preserved as a miniature specimen of a marsh country that once had an area of something like two thousand five hundred square miles. These few reedy acres are all that remains of the morass, the land of mud and sluggish water, that surrounded the island of Ely. Here, half on land and half in water, lived a race apart, the Fenmen; who may have suffered rheumatism and died young of ague but who, while they lived, lived

easily enough from the abundant wildfowl that haunted their marshes and the abundant fish from their streams. Had the Fenmen been asked, there would have been no drainage; when Stuart 'adventurers' began to drain they rebelled, and at first with success. But it was their misfortune to own riches of which they made no use—in their marsh was the makings of some of the best soil in England; and those who knew what it held in possibilities in the end were stronger than the Fenmen. So Vermuyden, the Dutchman, came in to cut his water-courses; acres by the thousand and the hundred thousand were drained and brought under the plough; the wildfowl retreated to seek other refuge . . . and to-day there is only the exhibit of Wicken to remind us of what was once the Fen.

XI. A CITY OF GOOD BUILDING

OF the tasteless building that disfigures our poor England I have written in an earlier chapter and written, I believe, with emphasis; but the fact that the large majority of our people is in no way troubled by housing that is shoddy or badly proportioned should not be taken as proof that esteem for good building has passed from among us and that English architecture, like Moorish lustre, is one of the arts that are dead. On the contrary, there are men in this country who, given their chance by municipal authority, can lay out new suburbs and transform slum areas in a fashion worthy of comparison with the best the Continent can show us. If any think I have claimed too much for them, I suggest that he spend a day or two at Liverpool and see what the director of housing and his band of assistants have accomplished in the last few years. Slumdom in Liverpool is by no means abolished; the housing authority plans for years of work ahead; but what has been done is something for the city to be proud of.

It may be that architects, like prophets, are without honour in their own country; for I cannot but think that some of the 'council' dwellings of Liverpool are far more convenient, in many respects, than the much-vaunted blocks of Vienna. I said so once, at a London dinner-table, and was promptly told by one of those present (who, I think, knew neither Vienna nor Liverpool) that I had a reactionary mind. To which my reply was that if it be reactionary to prefer a hot bath



Director of Housing, Liverpool
LIVERPOOL HOUSING

Above—A children's playground. Below—A shopping centre.

in your own flat, and without extra charge, to the arrangement prevailing in some, at least, of the Viennese blocks—a communal bath-house, reached across a courtyard and charged for every time of using—then I was a reactionary, a shameless reactionary, and fully intended to remain so.

Much of Liverpool's new housing has arisen on its borders in the form of garden suburbs; but being a port, with a docker population, it has also been necessary to clear and rebuild in the centre of the town. A docker population whose jobs are irregular—obtainable from day to day and from hour to hour—must needs live close to its work; hence the tenements that have risen in the centre of the city are largely occupied by families dependent on the Mersey docks for their livelihood. I was shown over several of these tenement dwellings, some already complete, others still in process of construction; and I saw no reason to doubt my architect-guide when he told me that the type of flat the Liverpool municipality provides at a rental of a few shillings weekly would, if it were built in London, and let at ordinary competitive rates, cost the tenant from a hundred and fifty to two hundred pounds a year. Perhaps the London flat might be a little smarter—provided with a few extra chromium-plated gadgets; the block in which it stood might be adorned by a porter clad in uniform and have the convenience of a lift. But as far as necessities and ordinary daily comforts are concerned, the Londoner, paying many times his rent, would be no better off than the Liverpool 'council' tenant.¹

¹ Here are one or two examples of the rents payable in these Liverpool dwellings. Flats erected under the 1930 Act, and containing living-room, two bedrooms, bathroom, and scullery, range

Here I note with admiration that these Liverpool tenements are better equipped than any I have seen for dealing with the migratory bug. In all housing estates which accommodate ex-tenants of insanitary areas the advent of the bug must be looked on as inevitable; the bedding, etc., of a slum-dwelling family can be removed by the sanitary authority and fumigated but it is impossible to fumigate the slum-dwelling family itself, and the clothes in which it makes the transit to its new quarters are likely enough to harbour vermin. In these Liverpool flats, however, the wall is cornerless and rounded to the floor, and nowhere, either on wall or floor, is there any visible crack or join in which the bug may take refuge and proceed to multiply in secrecy. Even the cupboards afford him no retreat, being specially designed for his undoing; they are not, in fact, cupboards in the ordinary sense, but recesses. In each of these recesses stands a detached framework of shelves which, at any suspicion of harbouring vermin, can be lifted out, examined, and sprayed. Since a haven is denied to the imported bug, all he can do, when he gets to floor or wall, is to crawl about on an impenetrable surface where, sooner or later, he is bound to meet with his doom.

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Teutonic inspiration is obvious in many of the Liverpool housing blocks; the massive archways and rounded

(in a five-story building) from six to seven shillings, according to floor; with living-room, three bedrooms, bathroom, and scullery, from seven and six to eight and six. What we should call flatlets are obtainable at three and six. To be noted that these rents are subject to variation with increase or decrease of rates.

balconies are reminiscent of Berlin, Frankfort, or Vienna; at the same time there has been no slavish imitation of Teutonic models and the latest housing schemes are those which least resemble them. The courtyard entered through a gateway—the usual Viennese method of building flats—has been abandoned of late years for a style less suggestive of fortification. The tenement blocks are still ranged in the form of a square, but the square is no longer a closed one; it has open corners through which the air can blow freely; this being, of course, a healthier arrangement, as in an enclosed courtyard the atmosphere is bound to be more or less stagnant. Beds and borders of shrubs have been set in many of the courtyards and my guide drew attention to the unfenced condition of some of these evergreen gardens. Railings, he said, gave an unfriendly look and they were trying to make them unnecessary; it was hoped to get the tenants to take pride in their gardens and create a public opinion which would resent disrespectful treatment of the common property. So far, I gathered, that hope had not always been fulfilled; the child is naturally a destructive animal and residence in slums does not breed respect for surroundings.

Hardly necessary to state that these Liverpool housing schemes are not without provision for the interests and amusements of the young; in some instances at least there are boys' and girls' clubrooms, and the photograph opposite page 132 gives an idea of the outdoor amenities enjoyed by the younger population of the tenements. Incidentally, some of these children's playgrounds were the pleasanter to look at because their surface, though asphalt, was not of the usual asphalt colour; it had been sprayed with a grass-coloured green.

There is nothing unusual, however, in provision of amenities for the use and enjoyment of the child; this is the age of a youth that must be served, whatever its elders go without. What is more unusual, and therefore more worthy of record in these pages, is the care of Liverpool's housing authority for those who are getting on in life. 'There's so much done for the young,' I was told, 'that the needs of the old are sometimes overlooked—but we try to remember them when we build.' Accordingly special provision has been made for the domestic comfort of the 'past-work' citizen; for instance, in one of the suburban estates, there was pointed out to me a green garden space surrounded on three sides by cottages—two-storied cottages, containing little flats and one-roomed flatlets, designed for the use of aged persons. I was told, by the by, that one such colony of old-age pensioners had been settled in the neighbourhood of a children's playground, and when this was realized it was thought by certain kindly officials that the old ladies and gentlemen would be worried by the constant shouting and running to and fro of the children; they suggested, therefore, that the playground should be moved and placed in a more convenient spot. The suggestion was not carried out, however, because when passed on to the tenants of the cottages, it was received with anything but favour; far from being annoyed by the children's games, the old people found them a constant source of interest—something to look at and talk about. Because we have reached the pensionable age, it does not follow that we need no diversion and like to live alone with our thoughts.

There is another respect in which housing estates on

the outskirts of Liverpool are wisely and kindly planned. Their shops are not scattered, as they are in some new suburbs; they are collected into what are known as shopping centres—streets and terraces where haberdasher, butcher, baker, and tobacconist ply their callings side by side. This arrangement, for women who live in such a district, means more than convenience in the making of their household purchases; it gives them opportunity for meeting their neighbours, for looking in shop-windows and discussing their contents, for the little daily interests of the market-place which, in many new estates, are conspicuous chiefly by their absence. The reason why so many dwellers in mean streets dislike the idea of a move to council houses is (no doubt of it) the sameness, the dullness of the nice, clean suburbs into which they are shifted from their slums. I myself can certify that I have walked round more than one nice clean suburb—quite decent as to building and well planned from the health point of view—and, all the same, I have pitied the housewives whose lot was cast in their modern and sanitary precincts; and who, from their kitchens—electrically lit and with up-to-date gas-cookers—looked out on one tidy, monotonous street and went out to shop in another. For it is the homekeeping women—the wives and mothers—who are the real sufferers from suburban monotony; the man of the house will go out to his work, the children to their daily school—the wife and mother, on the other hand, has no such twofold existence. The older quarters of a city, whatever their disadvantages in the way of sanitation, overcrowding and the like, give her more variety in the way of streets, shops, and passing humanity—also

of places of amusement. A central district, as a general rule, will have a wider choice of cheap picture theatres and music-halls than the average housing estate. Hence the importance of these shopping centres, as an antidote to the monotony of districts which have come into being by plan instead of by growth.¹

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Planning is one of the enthusiasms of our post-War world; so much so that we are sometimes in danger of

¹ One of the disadvantages of 'council' suburbs is their isolation of the class for whose use they are intended—an isolation which makes for monotony and narrowness of outlook. Also these 'classified' communities offer few odd jobs to the unemployed and elderly; the old lady, for instance, who would be welcomed elsewhere when she came to 'oblige,' finds no one desirous of her services. Whoever may ignore this disadvantage, it has been recognized by the Housing Committee of Liverpool which is planning its recently acquired Speke Estate on lines that show a departure from its previous estate developments. The Speke Estate—higher up the Mersey than Liverpool itself and seven to eight miles from the centre of the city—is situated in a district 'where industrial development is already taking place and likely to increase when it is realized that an adequate supply of labour is available and will be suitably housed in the immediate vicinity. . . . The estate has been planned so as to accommodate all classes of the community, thus avoiding that segregation of one class, *a condition which is now widely recognized as a deterrent to social progress.* [Italics not in the original.] The proposals therefore are for a self-contained community unit rather than for a dormitory estate for occupation only by the lower paid workers.'

Other municipalities, engaged in development, might well take note of the following: 'A site for a cinema has been reserved in the main social centre [of the Speke Estate]. In view of its prominence the sale of the site will be subject to stringent restrictions as to elevations and it is hoped that the building will form an attractive feature of the estate.'

forgetting that the Plan, like the Sabbath, was not made that man should be subject to it. One hears it spoken of as if it were always beneficial, and must be so—a sure and certain remedy for most of the social evils that afflict us; but like all other remedies in this imperfect world, planning has reactions that are not altogether satisfactory. It is impossible, in this overcrowded island of ours, that expansion of our cities should be left any longer to its own guidance, its instinctive method of growth—the expert must take command. All the same, the planning process should be entered on with caution, if only because our horizon of the years is so limited—and more easily to-day than when Burns drove a furrow, the best-laid schemes of mice and men are apt to go badly agley! Who can say with certainty what will be the needs of England a few years hence? Who shall say that some of our careful plans may not have to be unplanned by the next generation of the English? A few decades ago, when the traffic of the streets meant the horsedrawn vehicle—when the steamroller moving at a walking pace was preceded by a man who waved a red flag—it was sometimes regretted that our railway systems, from north, south, east, and west, had pushed their way to London without co-operation; each setting up its separate terminus—at King's Cross, Paddington, Waterloo, Victoria—in the spot most convenient at the time. How much better (it was argued in those pre-petrol days) if the various companies had looked ahead and foreseen the advantage to themselves and their passengers of linking up their several systems at one large Central London Station. I do not imagine any planner of to-day would advocate such an idea; a huge

composite station upon which would converge, in an unending stream, the traffic from all parts of London and London's suburbs; the passengers and luggage destined for the Continent and the world in general, destined for Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, for the north, south, east, and west! Such a composite station, if our fathers had built it, would probably have to be pulled down and distributed, in order to relieve the congestion of the streets and enable the Londoner to get about his daily business; Victorian lack of foresight with regard to the building of railway stations has been of very real advantage to ourselves. As for the planning of our own generation—there can be few thinking people who do not realize that the world which we still try to think of as civilized is (thanks to the progress of science and invention) at the mercy of that combative instinct which nothing seems able to quench. Town-planning, after the next first-class war, will in all probability proceed on somewhat different lines from those to which we are accustomed. Rehousing schemes, in those years to come, may be less a matter of several-story flats and more a matter of cellarage. . . . An uncomfortable thought and discouraging to the present-day town-planners; but one that will not be suppressed!

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In Liverpool, as in all large seaports, there is much intermingling of races; an intermingling which, as well as producing a hybrid population, sometimes complicates the housing problem. There are numerous citizens of Liverpool whose ancestry on one side is African, and I have been waited on at table by a pleasant slant-eyed



Stewart Bale

LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL

girl whose Chinese father, disgusted at the birth of three daughters and never a son, had returned to China in search of a wife who would bear him the necessary boy. More important than her Africans and Asiatics is Liverpool's other immigrant contingent, her Irish; being but a few hours' steaming from Dublin, the city is a natural receptacle for the stream of emigration which, year in year out, flows steadily from Ireland to England—spite Mr de Valera's patriotic forecast of an Ireland whose children shall not be bred for export as if they were cattle. Some day, perhaps, that patriotic forecast may be realized; but as things are at present—with living, in England, often cheaper than in Ireland, with doles more generous and with work better paid—the export trade in Irishmen is still in a flourishing condition.¹ Much, be it added, against the wish of many citizens of Liverpool!

¹ It is, I believe, a fact that the Irish birth-rate in Great Britain and Northern Ireland is higher, at present, than it is in the Free State. This difference in rate is comprehensible enough because emigrants being usually young people, their departure means a lower proportion of the marriageable in the country on which they turn their backs. And whatever Mr de Valera may hope for in the future, there can be no doubt that an outlet for his workless or discontented countrymen is at present extremely desirable. It is, one may surmise, the need of such an outlet which debarred him from the step which his earlier followers expected of him when his party came into power—the declaration of an Irish Republic loosed from all ties to Great Britain. That declaration, as he very well knew, would have meant the closing of British ports to the Irish immigrant; the said immigrant having, with the hoisting of an Irish Republican flag, become an alien with no further rights in Great Britain. And it is more than possible that a Dublin Government would have had difficulty in dealing with would-be immigrants who were henceforth forbidden to draw wage and dole in the land of the hereditary enemy!

Although there are sufficient Orangemen in Liverpool to ensure that the glorious memory of Boyne Water shall be celebrated with traditional honours, the large majority of the Irish colony belong to the Roman Catholic faith—a fact which also has its bearing on the housing problem. The colony has its many and long-established churches and parishes; and it sometimes happens that the clearing of a slum area, however imperative from the point of view of health and however desirable for the planning of new districts, will appear in the light of disaster to a local priesthood which sees its congregation threatened with removal or dispersal—and which, as in duty bound, sets the eternal welfare of the Catholic soul above such temporary benefit to the Catholic body as may be obtainable through municipal schemes of rehousing. This clash of religious and civic ideals (a minor symptom of the long antagonism between Church and State) is by no means confined to the banks of the Mersey; there are other localities where the Catholic Church is strong enough to oppose with vigour the removal of her flocks from the care of their accustomed shepherds; but in Liverpool, with its swarming Irish element, the problem may well be more acute than elsewhere.

It is to the size of its Irish population, no doubt, that Liverpool owes the grandiose project of its Catholic cathedral, now in the process of building. The cathedral's foundations were laid in 1933 and its day of completion will not be for many years hence; but when that day comes, it will be among the mightiest of churches. Meanwhile Liverpool is a city of two unfinished cathedrals; the great Anglican church, the longer

of the two in building, has reached a more advanced stage than the Catholic; the east end—choir and adjacent chapels—has long been open for service. Its aim, as to size, is less ambitious than that of its Catholic neighbour; but if its Catholic neighbour, in the day of completion, exceeds it in dignity and beauty of detail, it will have reached a high standard indeed! Above all modern churches in which I have set foot, this cathedral of Liverpool proclaims itself work done to the glory of God.

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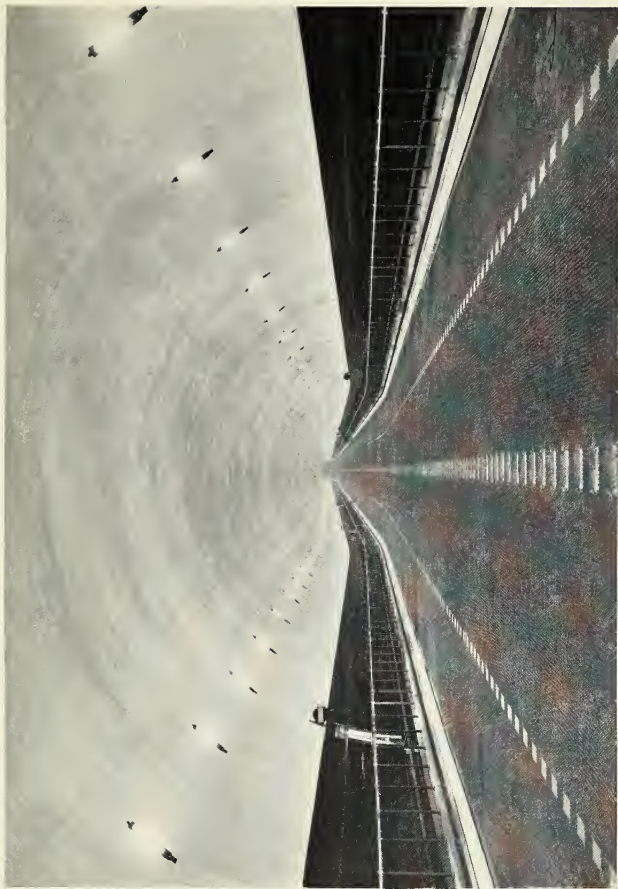
There was a time (I believe within memory of the living) when steamboat ferries were the only transport between the Lancashire and Cheshire banks of the Mersey; a good enough method in fair weather but apt to be chilly in winter and also to be lengthy in fog. Later came the gloomy 'underwater' railway to Birkenhead; an advantage to the daily business-going passenger but not of any use to the motorist. He, for many years, had to take his choice between a flat-bottomed ferry-boat plying the Mersey or the hybrid structure, between road and bridge, which is known by the name of transporter and makes its transriverine journey at Runcorn, lying several miles east of Liverpool.

These older methods are still in use but with nowadays the addition of the Mersey Tunnel; which, for the whole of its length—two miles and more—is sacred to the user of the wheel. The man who goes afoot is forbidden to enter its precincts; if he wants to see the tunnel (and it's well worth his inspection!) he must take his car or his bicycle. The traffic that uses it is

subject to strict regulation; there are separate lines for the swifter and slower-moving vehicles; the slow-moving must keep to the side, and risk of accident in the tunnel is minimized by forbidding change from one line of traffic to another, and not only forbidding overtaking but insisting that each driver must keep a given distance from the car or the bicycle ahead of him. There is a junction where a road branches off to the docks, and the movement of traffic at the angle is controlled by the usual lights. The photograph opposite this page gives some idea of the clean impressiveness of the tunnel—I think one might almost say magnificence. Its advantage, of course, is more than local; the through-travelling motorist, on his way north or south, is saved from the change and delay involved by overhead crossing of the Mersey. Like its competitors, the ferry and transporter, it demands a toll from those who make use of it; but, in right of superior convenience, its toll is considerably heavier.

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Shipping, like other forms of industry, has of late years turned from the north of England to the south; sailings to America that once were almost a monopoly of the Mersey are now made from Southampton Docks—with effects, no doubt, upon Liverpool's roll of unemployment and Liverpool's prosperity in general. All the same there is plenty of ocean traffic to be watched in and out from the landing-stage—though not, I discovered, to be watched with the freedom of times past. In days gone by when I stayed in Liverpool, I strolled on to the landing-stage whenever I saw fit—usually when



THE MERSEY TUNNEL

Stewart Bale

a liner was about to put out for America; it was always a thrill to see the gangway pulled in and watch the gap widen between her side and the quay. I asked no permission; no one said me nay; and, with others like-minded, I stayed there as long as I would—sometimes till the ship had reached the open sea and vanished in the western distance. . . . Being in Liverpool in 1937, on the day of a Canadian Pacific sailing, the old attraction drew me again towards the landing-stage; I say 'towards' because, before I reached it, I was stopped at a gate by a policeman. I explained, in some astonishment, I was going to the landing-stage, just in order to see the ship start; the policeman replied that he couldn't let me through unless I was furnished with a pass; he added, however, that this pass could be obtained at the Canadian Pacific Company's office, a few minutes' walk from the quay. Accordingly I took my way to the office and inquired for the gentleman responsible for permits; who, on his side, asked for no reason—demanded no reference—but at once complied with my request. Armed with my chit, as certificate of character, I went back to the gate and was duly allowed on to the landing-stage, where, in contemplation of the bustle of departure, I passed the next three-quarters of an hour. By that time the ship was well out in the Mersey, but the day being pleasant and my time my own, I had every intention of staying where I was, when a neighbouring policeman lifted up his voice and ordered us all off the landing-stage. We went, as directed, like good, obedient citizens; but for the life of me I could not see why we should be ordered to go? Why we could not be allowed to look after our ship and dawdle in the

sunshine on the landing-stage, as we used to look and dawdle in the days when life was less regulated? . . . By a friend of mine who lives in the city I was told that this restriction on the freedom of the quays was one of the legacies of war. In the day of spies and torpedoed shipping it was, of course, impossible to allow free access to the landing-stage; and when war was over (so one must conclude) restriction had become a custom of the place—a habit that no one thought of breaking. So the policeman at the gate still asks for a pass—which once had significance and now means nothing at all. Like that other custom acquired in wartime, of inscribing our names and nationalities the moment we arrive at an hotel. A ridiculous survival, if one thinks of it! If I were wanted for arson or forgery or theft or picking pockets, should I give my name and address correctly, for the clerk to hand on to the police? Or if I were a foreign naval officer spying out British defences—or a Third International agitator, bent on stirring up riot and disorder—should I be so foolish as to write myself down by name and title? The whole proceeding is a waste of good time, ink, and paper; one of the choking little regulations which we ought to resent as interference with our private concerns. Which the elder generation, perhaps, does resent but the younger takes as matter of course.

XII. RECREATIONS—VARIOUS

THERE are certain trades that, when times are bad, do not suffer with industry in general and one of them, I have it on good authority, is the tobacco trade; when the number of unemployed increases less meat will be eaten, fewer clothes will be bought, but it does not follow there will be any decrease in the demand for cheap cigarettes. And in that, when one thinks of it, is nothing surprising; tobacco is probably the last of his pleasures the man on the dole will give up—and being on the dole, with nothing to do but sit beside his fire or hang about the street, he may even, so long as he has pence in his pocket, be tempted to smoke more than usual. In consequence, for regular sale and employment, you will hardly better the tobacco trade.

The cheap picture palace, I imagine, is in much the same position with regard to unemployment—so long, that is to say, as it does not over-multiply itself. The enforcedly idle naturally turn to entertainment; an hour or two at the picture palace is a break in their long, unoccupied day, and pence will somehow be spared for it. Rightly, it seems to me; since we do not live by bread alone, and if ever a man needs distraction from daily monotony, it must be when his trade has no use for his willing hands. There must be many households in workless areas where life would be nearer than it is to hopelessness if it were not for the fillip of the pictures.

There was a time, and that but a few years ago, when

it seemed that, in the provinces at any rate, the older form of drama—non-mechanized drama—was doomed. Theatre after theatre closed its doors; sometimes for good, sometimes to reopen as a variety house or in the service of the conquering pictures. In England to-day there are scores of small towns which once had their minor theatres or halls and their regular visits from touring companies, and where now the cinema palace is the only place of entertainment. One reason, of course, for this sweeping triumph of the cinema is that it presents to an audience in Little Pedlington or Slocum-on-the-Mud the same star and the same scenery that it presents to an audience in London, Glasgow, or New York. The touring company, on the other hand, cannot duplicate a London production; it brings touring actors instead of stars, and its scenery, if the play is at all spectacular, is bound to be less convincing than the scenery of Shaftesbury Avenue.

The touring system, as the elder generation of actors knew it, is for the most part extinct; a play that has been an outstanding success on the London stage will still be sent on a provincial tour, and there are theatres throughout the country that live on the remnants of the system; but, as regards the smaller towns, the regular weekly movement of companies from one theatre to another has long been a thing of the past; theatres have closed or transformed themselves into picture palaces because they could no longer obtain their regular dramatic supply.

But, spite of odds against it, and spite of the prophets, the theatre proper still exists in the English provinces—sometimes in unexpected quarters. In two separate northern districts which are far from prosperous (one of

them, at least, is classed as 'Special Area'), there are theatres that continue to be theatres and support local repertory companies. One of these companies has a brief touring system of its own, playing alternately in two towns a few miles apart. Even before industry began to drift away from them, these particular towns were not, theatrically speaking, a good proposition—the experienced management booked them only when it must; yet here, in bad times, was a repertory company, competing with the local cinema theatres and managing to keep its end up. My stay in the district being of the briefest, I was not able to see the company play; I should have liked to do so, if only to judge of the support it was receiving, but my time was fully booked up. Then, two or three weeks later, in another distressful region of the north, I again saw posters of a local repertory company—and again, unfortunately, it was not possible to make its nearer acquaintance. I met some of its patrons, however, and inquired concerning it—and was told that it not only managed to keep going but was waging a successful contest with the local cinemas and carrying off some of their audience. . . . Perhaps the tide is turning in the English provinces and the living theatre—the actor's theatre—beginning to recover some of the ground it had lost to the ubiquitous screen play.

If so, its 'come-back' will be largely due to that modern development of the old stock company which goes by the name of repertory; if it had not been for the repertory theatres, drama, when the touring system collapsed, would, in many parts of England, have been unknown to the younger generation and a memory only to the elder. Best known are Sir Barry Jackson's creations

of the Birmingham Repertory and the Malvern Festival; and the Liverpool Repertory (called nowadays the Playhouse), which, in the words of its chronicler,¹ after 'years of an existence often precarious and never without excitement . . . has come to have something of the dignity of a civic institution.' These Birmingham and Liverpool theatres—and to a lesser degree the other local repertories their example has fostered—have not only kept honourable drama alive on their stages but given to the towns in which they play a dramatic life of their own.

There might be more towns with a dramatic life of their own if it were not for a drawback which repertory, as a whole, has not yet dealt with successfully—the overworking of its actors. Liverpool and Birmingham can put on a play for a fortnight—a run which gives sufficient time for rehearsal; but lesser companies, with their new play a week, are bound to over-study and under-rehearse, and so lower their standard of acting. At one time or another, I have seen the work of several such companies; and though at the beginning of a season the acting may be satisfactory and the production smooth, as weeks go by the effects of the system will show—in tired and unfinished acting. That is the obstacle to good work in the smaller towns, where weekly change of bill is necessary; an obstacle that is unlikely to be overcome until repertory companies follow the advice of Mr St John Ervine and every now and then exchange theatres.

When the history of the theatre in the twentieth century is written—the living theatre as distinct from the screen play—a good deal of the credit for keeping it

¹ Grace Wyndham Goldie, author of *The Liverpool Repertory Theatre*.

alive in England will probably be given to the amateur. Legion is the name of the amateur actor in England—and likewise in Scotland; his societies and clubs run to hundreds. And this amateur movement, be it noted, is not confined to any one class of the community or any one part of the country; it is symptomatic of a widespread interest in the work of the playwright and the art and craft of the actor. When the Drama League holds its periodical contests, all sorts and conditions of men and of plays come up for the verdict of the judges.¹ In 1937 the number of entries for the Community Theatre Festival—that is to say, of teams sent up by amateur societies—amounted to 648; these, by a gradual process of elimination were reduced to the half-dozen which competed, on the stage of the Old Vic, for the supreme trophy, the Howard de Waldon Cup. The winning team on this occasion came from the north, from Newcastle; it represented a dramatic club run by members of the local Y.W.C.A. And among their competitors were clubs run by textile workers, students, church groups, and gas employees.²

The amateur movement, as a matter of course, will furnish recruits to the professional theatre; but perhaps its chief importance to the art of the stage lies in the

¹ A friend of my own who frequently produces plays for amateur societies in the north of England has told me of girls who, after a day of heavy work at a Lancashire mill, will turn up of an evening to rehearsal, and turn up full of enthusiasm.

² Marjorie Hessel Tiltman, in her *English Earth*, speaks of the growth of the Village Drama League, founded in 1918. 'These village societies demand the best; they read and perform Shakespeare and Galsworthy . . . and their natural feeling for words helps them to reject the cheap and unreal.'

fact that it creates an intelligent audience. Even if it be granted that a goodly proportion of the membership of amateur societies and clubs has no particular talent for the stage—that it joins its society out of vanity or just for the fun of dressing-up—still, there will always be those who take genuine pleasure and genuine interest in their work, and who look upon the stage as something more important than a place to show themselves off. These are the people who, because they have acquired some knowledge of stage technique, as well as some understanding of stage difficulties, can bring intelligence to their appreciation of the actor's work and thereby give him the stimulus which calls for the best that is in him. For what the artist needs as stimulus is not the gaping adoration of the 'fan' but the understanding of his work; while the tendency of the average English audience is to be kindly rather than critical, and to know what it likes—but not why!

There is yet another reason—and perhaps the most important—why this widespread interest in acting should be welcomed. In our age of mechanization the human factor takes a smaller and ever smaller share not only in work but in amusement—its own amusement. The orchestra is ejected in favour of 'canned music'; when we dance of an evening, it is no longer necessary for someone to sit at the piano—if it is not the hour for the wireless dance band, the gramophone will oblige. Music in the home, as a general rule, was inferior to music turned on from Broadcasting House; but it meant the exercise of faculties and talents which are now ceasing to be cultivated. Fortunately, however, the pleasure the amateur takes in his acting—in acting as

an art or merely as make-believe—cannot be provided by any form of mechanism. It is quite distinct from the pleasure of witnessing the traffic of the stage; whether we play lead or come on in the crowd, it is a pleasure we can only provide through our own activities. In the acting game, as in the games of the field, there is need for discipline and team-work as well as for individual skill—and nowadays the sporting spirit is encouraged by the competitions of the Drama League. Grace Wyndham Goldie, in the book from which I have already quoted, notes that ‘the [amateur] movement as a whole, with its district clubs and departments eagerly watching their acting “teams” as they pass from “area” to “divisional” final, and following their fates as they travel to London in a supreme effort to “win the cup,”’ is showing signs of turning dramatic enterprise into an English national sport. Such universal, such personal, such active interest in plays and playmaking, in acting and staging, can scarcely have been known in England since medieval guildsmen acted in English market squares.’

Obviously the stage play takes a lot of killing. When the purveyor of public entertainment throws it over for the screen play; when it is driven from the theatre that once was its own; it picks itself up and makes itself a home with the amateur—with the factory club, the women’s institute, and the local dramatic society.

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Gambling, I suppose, if in part an attempt to do business on highly advantageous lines, may also be considered an amusement; one of the most popular amusements of the English race indulged in nowadays by

women as well as by men. There is, of course, no means of knowing to what extent the women of the country have followed the example of their menfolk and taken to gambling as a habit; but on more than one occasion, in small industrial towns, I have lodged in streets where the majority of housewives seemed to deal with the book-maker, in sixpences and shillings, as regularly as they did with the baker. Betting, I believe, is illegal, at any rate in some of its manifestations, but attempts to suppress it by the law of the land seem to have about as much effect as Mrs Partington's mop on the Atlantic. While the Post Office is dishonourably opening our letters, in order to prevent the purchase of tickets for the Dublin sweep, a formidable percentage of the British public is risking its money, without let or hindrance, in football pools.¹ Forty millions a year is said to be the turnover of the pool promoters—forty million pounds sterling, made up of small weekly stakes! As I seem to be entirely lacking in the gambling instinct, I have no personal experience of the system whereby one loses—or gains—over pools; but I gather from a document, issued by a firm which carries on the pool business, that the letter of the law is complied with if you send in your list without money attached and pay your losses by

¹ 'If there is any distinction at all between a football pool and a lottery, it is a distinction with a purely metaphysical difference. Yet while Parliament (in the Betting and Lotteries Act of 1934) smote lotteries hip and thigh, and rigorously strengthened the law against them, it expressly went out of its way to legalize pools, and though it did not mention football by name in the relevant clause, it made no secret that football was what it had in mind.' From an article in the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*—one of a series on Football Pools—of February 10, 1938.

post. You mustn't, the document insists, call in person on the pool promoters, and you mustn't put your stake down in cash. Since gambling debts are not recoverable in courts of law, there would appear to be a risk of dishonest clients refusing to pay up their losses; but it is clear, from one of the conditions laid down, that the pool industry is aware of the risk and has taken measures to protect itself. All clients introduced (there seems to be a formality of introduction) have to furnish an address which, of course, can be verified; and any client failing to remit what he owes, is warned that he will be posted as a defaulter, and, by that fact, be debarred from investing in any football or racing pool in the country. If this method of boycott is really effective, the gambler will keep to his bargain rather than incur it; send off the postal order that covers his losses and live in hopes of the magnificent win that will cover them many times over. There must be thousands, many thousands, of our countrymen who dream of that win every week, and presumably recurring pleasure in the dream outweighs recurring disappointment. If it did not, there would be no pools.

You cannot, apparently, have any form of racing without its accompanying bets and by the owner of a pigeon-loft—a Durham ex-miner—I was told of the stakes, from wage or dole, that are laid on the homing pigeon. You stake from a penny, if you have not much faith in your bird, to as much as half a crown if you think him a likely winner. There are surprises, however, in racing with birds, just as in racing with horses—an outsider, in the shape of a penny competitor, will come romping home ahead of the high-priced favourite. It is not, of

course, left to the owners of the birds to decide their order of arrival at the lofts; every racing club owns a species of clock-machine in which must be deposited the stamped rubber ring that the pigeon has worn on its leg. Before the birds are sent off in their baskets for the race, the secretary of the club issues to each one its ring—at the end of the flight, it is removed from the leg as swiftly as possible, and dropped into the clock, which registers the time to a second. That being so, there can be no dispute about the winner. As in every form of sport the element of luck must be counted on; a bird, flying swiftly, may overshoot its loft and have to circle back—and so lose to a neck-and-neck competitor that has flown more directly to its home. That, said my friend, had happened recently with one of his own hens; she had overshot her mark and lost by a couple of seconds. He pointed out to me the best of his birds—one or two among them had made the long flight from France. For a race of that distance, a man is sent in charge of the pigeons on their outward journey, his fee and expenses paid by the competing clubs. Birds from the Durham district would be collected at Darlington and there take train for King's Cross, where, stacked in their baskets, their guardian and conductor would find other batches of competitors awaiting his escort to France. Finally, with the whole accumulation of baskets, he would cross the Channel; sometimes the birds were let out on the coast, sometimes, said the fancier, they were taken on to Paris, or near it. When the time draws near for the finish of a race, every man comes to his loft and stands waiting, with his eyes on the distance, for the first sign of a bird. 'We're all here and ready,' he told

me. 'All here and ready and waiting long before there's any chance of seeing 'em.' His loft was one of several erected on the outskirts of a small town in south-west Durham; all of them, I think, belonging to men who had followed the same calling as himself—the northern miner, for some unknown reason, has a special fondness for the pigeon. Hearing him talk of the finish of a race, I realized the thrill of the waiting owner when a speck comes into sight and he wonders if the speck is his bird! I learned from him, too, that racing is not just a matter of sending out a strong-winged pigeon—there are considerations of sex. Times when it is best to race your cock and other times for the hen; the hen, I think he said, would fly straightest to her loft when a nestful of eggs is awaiting her. Also when a long route is new to them, the birds have to be trained to it by stages. For the flight from Ireland to its home in Durham, the pigeon would first be taken as far as Brough, which lies to the east of the Pennines; then, as a further stage, to Lancaster, on the other side of the hills and close to the western coast. If this were not done, when the bird struck the coast on its flight from Ireland, it might not be sure of its direction. . . . Like all good fanciers, the man loved his pigeons—liked talking of them; they were wonderful creatures when you came to know them—no other birds like them for intelligence! I told him, in my turn, of the tablet erected to the pigeon of Verdun, sent from Fort de Vaux with a last message for help—and which flew through the poison of gas and smoke, brought in its message, and died. The miner nodded and said, Yes, he believed it; that was what a pigeon would do.

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It was somewhere in the north, and on a market day, that I ran against a quack doctor and spent half an hour enjoyably in the audience that crowded to his platform—where he was flanked impressively by a couple of ladies wearing hospital nurses' caps. The remedies he purveyed were understood to be herbal, and I dare say did no one any harm—perhaps did them good, if only as faith cures; but it was not the remedies but the manner of selling them that made me late for my lunch. The itinerant salesman, if he knows his job, is always a fellow of resource; he is trader, comedian, and mob orator combined, with his finger on the pulse of his public. This particular salesman was an adept in his calling; once he had gathered his crowd round him, he held it for as long as he would. As guarantee of his qualifications, he told of war-service in a hospital in France; and though he never laid actual claim to a medical degree, he suggested a position of high responsibility, and it would not be surprising if some of his hearers were under the impression that his status in the hospital was that of surgeon in charge. Whatever the nature of his military-medical activities, they had evidently given him some acquaintance with the work of a dispensary; and on the strength of it—in defiance of the law of libel—he proceeded to show up the trade in patent medicines. Three well-known proprietary remedies—one of them advertised on a wall behind him—he analysed, metaphorically speaking, and told us what he thought of them, advising us that all the good they did us could be obtained far more cheaply, for twopence or threepence, with a little bicarbonate of soda. Being somewhat staggered by this frank denunciation, I went up

to him, at the end of his address, and asked if the patent medicine people whose wares he denounced didn't ever take action against him? To this his reply was brief and to the point: 'They'd like to if they could, but they daren't!' (It may be, however, that the patent medicine companies are not greatly disturbed by the attacks of itinerant herb-vendors.) As to whether his comments contained any truth—all I can say is that when I repeated some of them to a chemist of my acquaintance, he grinned rather sheepishly and volunteered no contradiction.

I should add that the address was enlivened by demonstration—the pouring of ingredients into various glass vessels; the result being usually a condition of fizz which was supposed to illustrate something that went on inside us. When the patent medicine people had been trounced and disposed of, the lecturer turned his attention to doctors and their remedies—for which he appeared to have little more respect. Say you went to your panel doctor, suffering the pangs of indigestion, he would probably supply you with a mixture in a bottle—a whitish mixture, such as you see here!—whereof the principal ingredient was again the useful bicarbonate of soda; if this failed to relieve you and you made a second visit, the doctor would certainly change your medicine—but how? According to the herbalist, by the simple process he performed before our eyes of adding a dash of dark-coloured fluid which turned the white liquid to brown. 'And that, ladies and gentlemen, is done very cheaply. The stuff he pours in to change the colour is nothing but a little burnt sugar!' After which, of course, you went away happy, thinking you had a

new remedy! . . . In this statement, also, there is probably a measure of truth; but as the average panel patient would feel himself cheated of his rightful dues if he were not provided with a bottle of some sort, the blame for the deception does not lie wholly with the doctor. As likely as not, he provides his mixtures out of kindness.

Be that as it may, by his patter and chemical demonstration the purveyor of herbs drew crowds; which, whether or no they believed all he said, stood there to listen, and, in many cases, to purchase. Considered as a salesman, he thoroughly deserved his success; considered as a showman, he gave better entertainment than many a salaried comedian! And, personally, I am bearing in mind his tip about bicarbonate of soda.

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One street entertainment that has all but passed is the barrel-organ; and with it, its own type of music—the tune that was caught up and whistled. Because he will not, or because he cannot, no composer of to-day produces it.

A night or two after the coronation, when the streets were still a show, I walked with the crowd from the Abbey to Trafalgar Square. Halfway along Whitehall an impromptu procession came towards us, marching in the middle of the road; lads and lasses to the number of two or three hundred, mostly waving flags and all of them singing energetically. And their marching song was a heritage from the nineties—a song from the great days of variety:

Daisy, Daisy, give me your answer, do!
I'm half crazy, all for the love of you!
It won't be a stylish marriage—
I can't afford a carriage—
But you'll look sweet
Upon the seat
Of a bicycle made for two!

In Trafalgar Square was also vociferous melody, proceeding chiefly from the plinth of Nelson's column whereof, thick as herrings in a barrel, the merry-makers had taken possession. Tight as they were wedged, they danced as well as sang; pranced, rather, since all they could do was to lift up their feet and set them down on exactly the same spot of plinth. And here, also, there rang upon the midnight air the appeal to Daisy to 'give me your answer, do!'

What with floodlight and obvious enjoyment of the young, Trafalgar Square was a good place to linger in, and perhaps for a quarter of an hour I stood listening to the chorus from the plinth; but so long as I listened, there was no modern item in the programme—nothing with the faintest resemblance to musical modernism. Two of the items that succeeded *Daisy Bell* were *The Old Folks at Home* and a war-time favourite—the ditty concerning the man who went to mow a meadow, accompanied by beer and a dog. The fact that a crowd of young people in 1937 fell back on old tunes in their day of rejoicing is not surprising, when one thinks of it—there are no new tunes to sing! One of the arts that is dead or dormant in England to-day is the art of writing melody that can be whistled or sung by the multitude. Interesting to note that the song of the

multitude was a casualty of peace; it lived and flourished mightily through the years of war—as long as we were blowing each other to bits there was never any lack of a chorus for men on the march: *Pack up your Troubles in your Old Kit-bag*, *The Long, Long Trail*, and any amount of others. But with the signing of the Armistice and the putting by of guns, the spirit of tunefulness went out of England, and, so far, has not come back; the popular song, as we knew it, has ceased to exist. The noises of the crooner are, no doubt, in a certain sense popular, but they have to be left to the expert; there is nothing for the boy in the street to catch hold of. Curious, this absence of English tunefulness, to those who remember the regularity with which music-hall and musical comedy used to turn out successive melodies for public consumption. *Oh, Mr Porter*, *The Old Bull and Bush*, *Tommy Atkins*, *At Trinity Church I met my Doom*, *The Man that broke the Bank*, and *Her Golden Hair was hanging down her Back*—we were never without something like that, something the gallery and the street took delight in. In time, with repetition they became a thorough nuisance, but not such a nuisance as your neighbour's set heard through your neighbour's open window. The street boy moved on with his *Old Bull and Bush*, but the radio jazz is immovable.

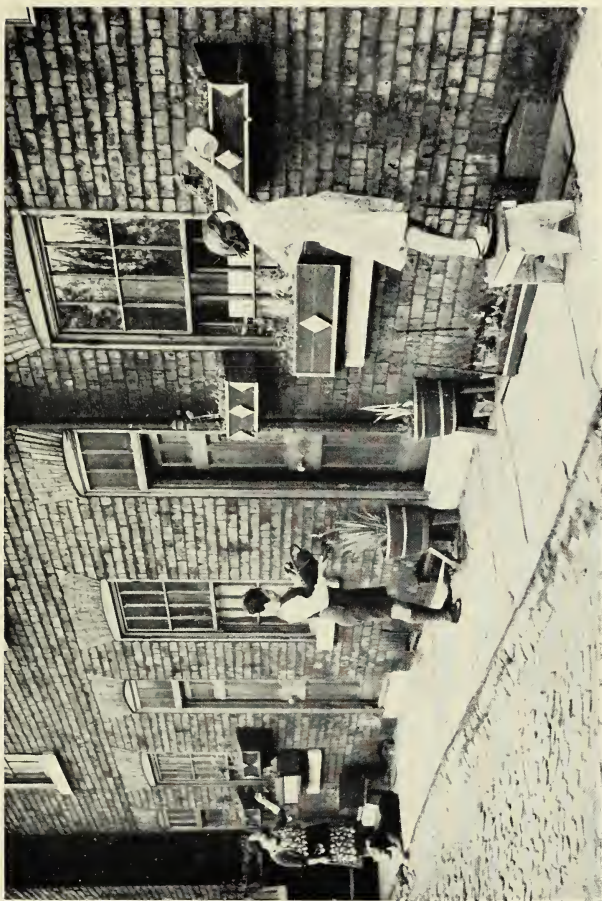
In spite of the fact that no one now composes melodies for general use, it is obvious that the singable melody is liked by the younger generation—which not only chants it at seasons of public rejoicing but will usually listen when the B.B.C. provides programmes of bygone variety. For all the pleasure it takes in crooning, the younger generation would, I believe, be glad of an occa-

sional song, if it could get one. It may be remembered that, a few years ago, when the *Londonderry Air* was brought to public notice, its tuneful sweetness was not long in reaching the streets; it was played on cornets outside public-houses and whistled by the lad who brought your newspaper. But there has been nothing since; we have had to fall back on *Daisy Bell*.

And with the singable melody there has almost died out the barrel-organ—the principal agency whereby it was disseminated; when one comes across a barrel-organ nowadays it is usually adorned with a placard explaining that the grinder is an ex-service man without pension or that the organ is his sole means of supporting a wife and several children. As an institution it has sunk to the level of the matchbox proffered from the gutter; it is merely a method of evoking charity, whereas once it was a genuine entertainment of the town. Until a few years ago the organ-grinder had his regular beat in residential quarters—would come along at much the same time on a Tuesday, a Thursday, or a Saturday. I wonder if there are any London by-ways where you can still see a good-natured grinder turning his handle while the children of the neighbouring tenements dance to his playing? Probably not, but in times gone by that ballet of the streets was a frequent sight in the poorer parts of London.

Perhaps the police have discouraged the barrel-organ to the point of extinction; perhaps the music of the radio has rendered its services unnecessary. Whatever the reason, it is a fast disappearing quantity; its place being taken, to a certain extent, by the little bands of instrumentalists who parade the gutter while one of their

number shakes a box. Here again the element of charity mingles very strongly with the element of entertainment; the box that is shaken to invite your pence will be labelled 'Ex-Service Men,' or 'Unemployed Musicians.' Some, at least, of those unemployed musicians are cases of genuine distress, men brought down to something near begging through no fault of their own; men who earned their livelihood in the orchestras of theatres or of picture palaces until they were ousted by the remorseless inventor whose canned music was cheaper than their services. One suburban picture palace I know of, when it installed an organ of mechanical effects, turned off no fewer than fifteen members of its orchestra—fifteen men who had previously earned good money. For such—since many are in the same plight—there may be little hope of regular re-employment at their own calling, and for those who cannot turn to another trade, what is left but the dole or music in the gutter? . . . One of the tragedies of our day, these unwanted musicians of the orchestra—of whom many were artists in their work. And, to some of us at least, with their passing from the playhouse goes something of the playhouse thrill. The music from a piece of unseen mechanism that now precedes the rise of the curtain does not stir the same pleasure of anticipation as the conductor did when he raised his baton for the overture!



STREET GARDENS IN LEEDS

XIII. THE MENACE OF LONDON

'No thought of pride has any connection in my mind with the idea of London. I am always haunted by the awfulness of London; by the great appalling effect of these millions cast down, as it would appear, by hazard on the banks of this noble stream, working each in their own groove and their own cell, without regard or knowledge of each other, without knowing each other, without having the slightest idea of how the other lives—the heedless casualty of unnumbered thousands of men. Sixty years ago a great Englishman, Cobbett, called it a wen. If it was a wen then, what is it now? A tumour, an elephantiasis, sucking into its gorged system half the life and the blood and the bone of the rural districts.'

So Lord Rosebery (once chairman of the London County Council), speaking nearly half a century ago, in the year 1892. And Rosebery's overgrown London of the nineties, though it dwarfed the capital that Cobbett called a wen, had not yet reached the tube-and-motor-bus era of expansion; cattle were still browsing on the sites of our newer suburbs and ribbon development was a term as yet uninvented. It was a London that knew not the factories of the Great West Road, knew not Dagenham to the east, Osterley to the west, or Worcester Park to the south; that had not yet made a suburb of Harrow nor annexed half Surrey for its dormitories. Vast as it seemed in the day of Lord Rosebery, it was compact and manageable beside the sprawling London of to-day.

I do not know what are the precise limits of London, in the legal, administrative sense; where the authority of a Middlesex or Surrey County Council begins and that of the L.C.C. leaves off. But this I do know: that if you take a bus at Piccadilly Circus and, from that point, go west as far as Hounslow, there will be bricks and mortar without intermission for something like a dozen miles; when there is a gap, at Hounslow Heath, it is, presumably, because the heath cannot be built on. From Piccadilly by Knightsbridge, Kensington, Hammersmith, Chiswick, Brentford—a string of separate municipal entities but without any visible material boundary to show for it. An agglomeration of human beings in an agglomeration of houses—it seems impossible, passing them all, that there can be any housing shortage. . . . London, the ant-heap of England!

And the same agglomeration if you take a bus from a central district towards any other quarter of the compass. Say you intend to leave London by the north—via King's Cross, York Road, Islington, Brecknock Road, Archway Road, Finchley—your way will lie through streets for much the same distance as when you travelled to the west. Journeying from the centre to the outer rim of London, one perceives the various strata of suburban growth. Brick of a dirty-grey colour, which begins in the inner regions, near King's Cross, denotes mid-Victorian expansion; then, farther on, comes the ugly red of the later-Victorian builder; while here and there, as you draw towards the rim, there will be a little house of older date which, sandwiched into a terrace of yesterday, survives from that vanished countryside of Middlesex in which its foundations were laid. The last and

newest layer of London is the layer of suburban flats. For a good many years we, in England, took slowly to flats, but of late we have become a flat-dwelling people, like the Scots, the French, and the Germans—like most other races, in short—and on the outskirts of London the villa estate is being superseded by blocks of flats, designed to attract the 'villa' class. When flats and villas have at last been left behind and the road has a field and a hedge beside it, you will have passed the sign that indicates eleven miles to London. That, at least, was where London ended yesterday; to-morrow, like enough, it will have reached the twelfth milestone, and the day after (unless the 'green belt' intervenes) it may have closed the gap between Barnet and the London outposts. 'The life and the blood and the bone of the rural districts'—every year London claims more of it, in humanity as well as in land. While ahead, far ahead, of its brick and concrete body marches the spirit, the influence of London; the influence that makes satellites of neighbour towns, sapping their local individual character, as well as their individual trade.

Sometimes, beyond the outer suburbs, on land hitherto untouched, one lights on the beginnings of urbanization to come. A month or two ago I found myself in a district of the Home Counties familiar to my childhood and, in the day of my childhood, country undisturbed, because twenty-seven miles from London and a good three miles from a station. Now the village, grown appreciably larger, is accessible from London by motor-bus several times a day, and the twenty-seven miles have grown shorter. Walking the road that had once been familiar, on the farther side of the twenty-seventh

milestone I came to a field, a field of many acres, where a ploughman was guiding his team. So I had often seen it in my childhood; I remembered the black earth and straight furrows, the church in the distance. So it was—but will not be much longer; at the edge of the field there was set up a board to catch the passing eye, and the notice upon it was: 'Freehold Building Land for Sale.' Only an hour by road from London—so next time I pass there will be villas and garages and tennis courts in place of land beneath the plough. . . . How many good acres, I wonder, has London, the insatiable, swallowed in my lifetime? For the first few years I lived in Chelsea there was a field with cows at the back of Kings Road, left behind by a retreating countryside; and there are streets in the west where you may see a row of suburban residences, each with a fruit tree or two in its garden; a reminder that here, until London overwhelmed them, were the orchards of Gunnersbury which sent cherries and pears to Covent Garden. That field of many acres at the twenty-seventh milestone—that field put up for auction because London still grows—has, I suppose, as ploughland or as pasture, given food to our people for centuries! Some day we, or those who come after us, may find it less easy than we do at present to feed ourselves on imports from beyond the Seven Seas—and may wish we had more furrows in the Home Counties, fewer garages and asphalt tennis courts. It is unlikely, however, that a town population, with abundance of tins and bananas to hand, will allow itself to be greatly perturbed by the thought of such a possibility.

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The ordinary Londoner is not, like Lord Rosebery, 'haunted by the awfulness of London'; but there is one respect in which he does resemble Lord Rosebery—his lack of pride in the city wherein he makes his home and livelihood. There was a time, no doubt, in the brave days of old when a Londoner bred, or even by adoption, could feel real pride in 'the flower of cities all'—because he could feel himself a citizen; a sensation, I imagine, only possible to-day to the very exceptional Londoner. Perhaps county councillors and other official persons may feel, now and then, a species of pride in the immensity of the place whose destinies they strive to direct; but that very immensity it is which stifles all pride in the rest of us. We—the rest of us—are just dwellers in our own district; for London, as a whole, we have no sense of citizenship. What have I, who live in Chelsea, to do with them of Dalston, with Willesden Green, Maida Vale, or Streatham? There is one inner region that a good many others make use of: the shops of Oxford and Regent Streets, the West End theatres; but there is very little else we have in common. If you live in Birmingham, in Newcastle, or Manchester, it is possible to feel that interest in your own place which we call the sense of citizenship; more than once in a provincial centre I have noted the contrast between great London, with no conscious community life, and those other cities in which it exists and is active. Exists and is active for the simple reason that Birmingham, Newcastle, and Manchester are not so large that their citizens live (in the words of Lord Rosebery) 'without regard or knowledge of each other.'

The millions that swarm on the banks of the Thames, those millions are too many for fellowship. They exceed

in number all the Scots who live in Scotland; all the Irish in the whole of Ireland would come to about half their total—if you added to the Irish all the Swiss in Switzerland, then London would about fill up. All the Swedes in Sweden, if transferred to London, would be about two million short of our present population; if the same thing were done with all the Austrians in Austria, the shortage would be rather less. All the Dutchmen in Holland would just about fit in comfortably. . . . Of course we have no sense of citizenship!

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We do not always realize that the overgrown city where human beings, by the hundred thousand, live without knowledge of the natural earth is a recent phenomenon in the history of the race. For centuries our ancestors have lived in towns, but the towns were of manageable size; it was only with the industrial era that they began to swell to their present unwieldy proportions. Before that era, even capitals expanded at a reasonable rate—as any map of old Paris, old London, old Berlin will show; their streets, for centuries, were never far distant from the fields and gardens with which they dealt for many of the necessities of life. Camberwell was a village in the day of Blake; he would walk to it from London through the fields that lay south of the Thames. The huge cities of to-day, with their crowded populations, larger than those of many small states, are producing inevitably their own type of mind; the urban mind which has always lived out of touch with the processes of growth—always lived surrounded by that which is made and

manufactured. The result of so living is an urbanized man to whom food is the product of a shop; a finished article he buys at a counter, and pays for with the token called money—with so many shillings or pence. The values of urbanized man are all money-values; which means that he thinks in terms of the money-token, seldom or never in terms of what it represents. The man who has lived in contact with the land, however backward his intelligence or limited his schooling, can never think only in terms of the money-token—can never think of bread superficially, as the townsman thinks of it; to him it is the product of more than pence laid on a counter—of ploughing and sowing, of rain, sun and wind, and the soil. . . .

To live in contact only with the made and manufactured—the works of man—is to have not only a limited outlook on life but, often enough, an exaggerated idea of the power of mankind and subjection of nature to our will; at the back of the urban mind is a conception of the earth and the fullness thereof as a species of food factory with regular supplies for distribution. Scarcity or plenty; years of drought or of flood; abundant fertility or exhaustion of soil; to the urban mind these have little connection with that cost of living with which it does concern itself; and which, it holds strongly, it is the business of governments to keep down! . . . And with that limited outlook on men and things, a good many millions of town-bred Englishmen grow up!

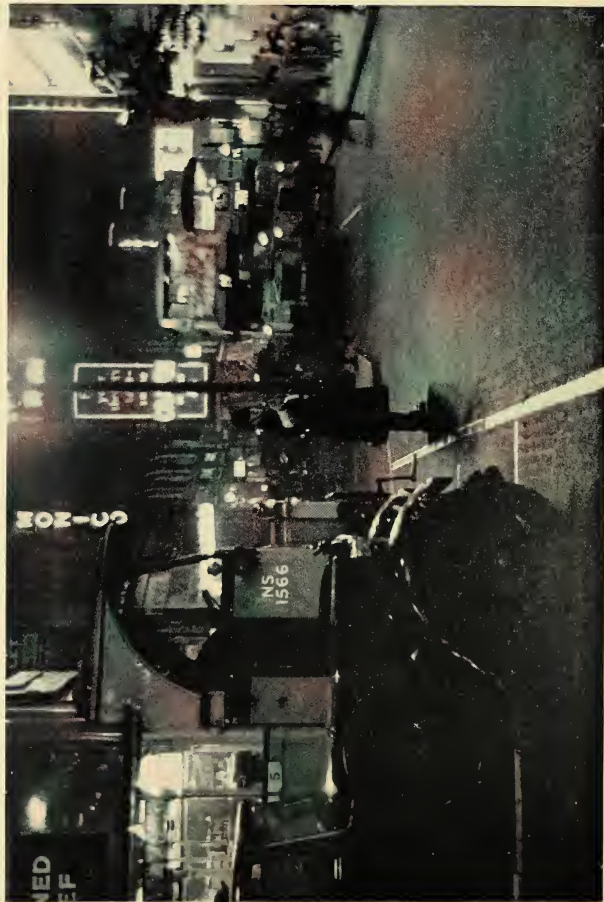
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However much the urban body may benefit by holiday exodus from its native brick and mortar, it is doubtful

if occasional holiday contact with the country does much towards correcting the bent of the urban mind; as I said in an earlier chapter, the fields and woods to which the townsman runs out on his Saturdays and Sundays may mean to him no more than an enlargement of his London parks. I heard that point made recently in a gathering convened for the purpose of discussing the overgrowth of cities; the influence on children of a purely town environment was one of the subjects considered, and it was said (I doubt not, correctly) that the practice of taking school classes into the country and giving them lessons in country surroundings, good as it is for the children's health, does not make much difference to their understanding of a rural world that is not theirs. To them, as to their week-ending elders, it will still be essentially a place of recreation and change; real work, as they see it, will still be accomplished in a region of streets—in the factory, the office, the shop. They will still have little understanding of the foundation on which their world is built.

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The larger the city, the more artificial the daily life of its millions; the more dependent on the systems whereby it is supplied with food and water, with transport and lighting and drainage—the systems and the minority of experts that control them. There must be experts in England (of defence, more especially) to whom that thought is an uneasy one; who, perhaps, from a Hampstead window have looked out over London, or surveyed its great sprawl from an aeroplane. And who, as they looked, have said to themselves: What will happen to it all if the network of system should break?



Harold Burdekin

CENTRAL LONDON BY NIGHT

A few decades ago, such a thought would have been fanciful, an idea to play with; but on the day the first aeroplane rose from the ground, the foundations of every city in the world were shaken. On that day the development of human society took a new turn—for retrogression or advance; for until that day the tendency had been for the town, all the world over, to increase in size and numbers. The town, in its beginning, was only the crowd; the herd of barbarians that stood by each other for greater safety, that dug ditches and made walls round their primitive village as defence against beasts and men. And from those beginnings—through centuries, through stages of fortress and walled town—there developed the industrial centre and the multitudinous capital. Through long generations the centripetal process has continued without check—the call of the street growing stronger. Until there was granted to civilized man his dream of the ages, dominion of the air; which gives power for the scattering of crowds and destruction of cities. And that, as I have said, may mean new developments in our manner of living, the decay of great cities in a world liable to war, the habit of living in smaller, more scattered communities—whence it is easier to take flight, should occasion arise.

Blücher, after Waterloo, looking out on London from the dome of St Paul's, is said to have exclaimed: 'What a place to plunder!' If the power of the air had existed in his day, he would probably have added: 'What a target!' that being the character with which the power of the air has invested the outsize city. Modern war apparently is fought on much the same principle as the general strike; the principle, that is to say, of using the non-combatant as an unwilling weapon—making him

suffer till he turns on his government and insists on surrender and peace. That being so, this London of ours is in a peculiarly uncomfortable position, having more non-combatants to be terrorized and panicked than the capital of any other nation with whom Great Britain is likely to engage in hostilities. . . . Not a pleasant prospect for the millions to be panicked; but since the human being, however ardently he preaches pacifism, will always fight in a cause he holds righteous, a prospect that may have to be faced!

It is her immigration-rate, not her birth-rate, that has made London the urban monstrosity she is; there is a fatal fascination about capital cities which no one has yet found a way to counteract. For centuries she has called irresistibly to the English provincial and not to the English provincial alone—to the Irishman, the Welshman, and the Scot. And her lure for them is no passing one; Englishman, Irishman, Welshman, and Scot, they come and they stay for good. While of late her lure has extended from man to his industries; the factory has been steadily leaving the north, to cluster and crowd on her outskirts.¹

Mr Robert Sinclair, author of *Metropolitan Man*,² suggests that the tide of migration may be turned by 'a couple of short sharp continental wars in which the London region had perhaps one good bombing each time.' That may be so, and perhaps it is the way that decentralization will come; but Mr Sinclair strikes me as unduly optimistic about wars, their methods and their length. They are not always short—our last one dragged on, expensively and bloodily, for something over four years.

¹ See Note D. The Growth of London.

² In an article in *Town and Country Planning* for June 1937.

And one could not rely on the bombing operations of the enemy breaking off at the moment convenient to ourselves when the London population was just sufficiently alarmed. The operations might go on so long and be so often renewed that the tide of migration turned in haste towards the provinces and a large proportion of London's eight millions began to seek refuge—anywhere! It does not need much imagination to perceive the inconvenience of that sudden process—to the country in general as well as to the emigrants themselves.

There are organizations that are seeking to turn the tide of migration by less drastic means, such as the promotion of satellite towns and garden cities which, unlike the dormitory suburb, will have a civic life of their own. Towns uncrowded as to housing and planned with respect for the countryside; towns of reasonable size, so that work can be reached and left without half an hour of standing in a train.¹ The existence of such organizations is all to the good—a hopeful sign for England of to-morrow—but the likelihood is they will have a long struggle before the human torrents that pour of a morning into business London can be diverted to garden cities, such as Letchworth, Wythenshawe, and Welwyn.

¹ 'Every general practitioner can tell the same tale; girls strained to breaking-point by the rush of travel to and from work, the long fatiguing, wasteful, unnecessary journeys, straphanging in buses and tubes. It is appalling to think of it, but it is, I am assured, a fact that on some of the London Passenger Transport Board's lines, at the peak periods, 12,000 persons are travelling, while there is seating accommodation for only 4,000. The strain on the young is very great; the strain on the aged is intolerable.'—From a speech delivered by Lord Horder at a Satellite Towns Exhibition, organized by the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association.

XIV. PROPAGANDA FOR THE YOUNG

IN the course of an exploratory wandering through one of the outer suburbs of west London, I perceived in the window of a bookseller's shop a typewritten document, pasted to the glass, which the pattern of its lines proclaimed as verse. The shop, a small one, had already attracted my attention by its prominent recommendation of the Left Book Club; and a nearer view of the typewritten product revealed it as yet another advertisement of the reddish volumes which disseminate like-coloured views. The poem (I pencilled it down in my notebook) was brief and to the point; it ran as follows:

Forced to make the choice themselves,
Our rude forefathers loaded shelves
With Tennyson and Walter Scott
And Meredith and Lord knows what!
But we don't have to hum and ha,
Nous avons changé tout cela—
Our books are chosen for us—thanks
To Strachey, Laski, and Gollancz!

As I stood and scribbled, I noticed that the owner of the shop had drawn nearer to his doorway and was watching me—evidently desirous of knowing what I thought of the poem. Nothing loth to make an opening, I asked, was it his work? He nodded assent and we entered into talk concerning it. Yes, he told me, the lines had attracted a good deal of attention; passers-by

often stopped to read them and, as a general rule, they were approved by progressive opinion. Once, it is true, an objection had been lodged, presumably by a fellow Left-winger; at any rate, a note had been pushed under the door, suggesting alteration of the last couplet. The statement that our books were chosen for us by Strachey, Laski, and Gollancz was not altogether to the writer's liking; it would be better, he thought, to put it that the three gentlemen in question *helped* us to choose our books. As the alteration had not been made, I concluded it did not meet with the author's approval—and in this I guessed aright. Not only were there literary difficulties in the way of the proposed amendment, while the couplet, as it stood, had an excellent rhyme and the requisite number of feet; accuracy also had to be considered and his own version, the bookseller maintained, was the more accurate of the two. It wasn't a case of helping to choose; the books were chosen by Strachey, Laski, and Gollancz, and, being chosen, sent out to the members of the club. So what was the point of alteration? . . . I agreed with the author, the lines ought to stand, as a fair description of the Book Club system; at the same time (though I did not tell him so) I thought I understood why the objecting club member would have preferred to have it put differently. As for the bookseller himself, he was entirely content to be saved the trouble of humming and ha-ing—that is to say, of thinking for himself—and to have his political reading matter selected for him in the manner of a schoolroom child. Apparently large numbers of like-minded readers are as anxious as himself to have their menu drawn up for them and be saved the mental effort of selection; and

that state of mind, when one thinks of it, is neither more nor less than acceptance of an intellectual dictatorship.

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The 'ideological' book club (of whatever persuasion) is one of the by-products of that process of mental regimentation which, in fact if not avowedly, has largely superseded the former ideal of education, as an aid to mental growth and development. Entirely superseded it in wide regions of the modern world, giving place to a system which should rightly be called not education but instruction and instruction on the narrowest of lines. It is a system for the mass-production of not too intelligent opinion; that is to say, of teaching and training which is not for the personal benefit of the scholar but for the advantage of the State or community bestowing it. Its teachers and professors are not seekers after truth but propagandists, desiring to bias the intelligence; their aim is the production of the uncritical, admiring, subservient human being whom America has christened the yes-man. And if you are to live as an uncritical yes-man, it really does not matter what accomplishments they teach you at school. We are told that in the Soviet Union the classes that were formerly illiterate are now being taught to read and write; but when reading is confined to subjects chosen by authority, and the right of comparison and judgment is denied, it does not greatly matter whether you are instructed by word of mouth or printed page in the statements you are bound to accept or the opinions you are bound to hold. If your mind is to be moulded to an approved pattern, it does not greatly matter what instrument is used in the moulding pro-

cess; the essential is that you conform to pattern and think what authority bids you. The pioneers of education for the multitude little thought that one of the results of their labours would be the school as an instrument of tyranny and means of ensuring the mental subservience of the scholar. Yet so it is!

It is not only in the Soviet Union that education has come to mean the confining, not the freeing, of the mind of man; the same process is in action farther west, directly in the schools of Germany and Italy, less directly among our own people. Less directly and also less generally because, happily, we have not yet decided on a particular pattern for England. Whereas the powers that be in Soviet Russia, in Germany, and Italy know exactly what they want their young people to think and to do, we have not yet attained to a sufficient degree of totalitarian idea to compile a mental drill-book for the young of the entire nation. Because it is not single-minded in the matter, public authority in England has not yet taken upon itself the responsibility of using education to produce an approved type of citizen, thinking only an approved type of thought; hence such mental drill-books as we possess at present are chiefly on sectional, partisan lines. And in England it is the 'progressive' groups and associations who seem to be most active in mental regimentation of the young. The ardent pacifist, like the ardent Left-winger, knows the type of mind required by his cause and seeks to develop it in youth and childhood by training in righteous partisanship. But 'progressive' sections of the community having led the way, other sections were bound to follow, and the association for youthful politicians

is now an established institution. Youth, being naturally inclined to partisanship, has always taken kindly to politics—kindly, in this instance, meaning vehemently; and the result in England has been the same in kind—though mercifully not as yet in degree—as in other parts of Europe where the young are encouraged to take interest in public affairs. Bring youth into politics, and you bring not only its eagerness and energy but its inexperience and fiery quality of partisanship, its tendency to look on comrades and opponents as milk-white sheep and black goats. And the world, at the present dangerous juncture, would seem to have need of the quality of tolerance—as a general rule not strongly developed in the young.¹

A woman of my acquaintance, a professor in one of the modern universities, said to me recently that the boys and girls who came up nowadays had less of what she called 'background' to their knowledge than their predecessors of even a few years ago; and I have wondered sometimes whether this deficiency were not, in part, a consequence of propagandist zeal; the endeavour to make boys and girls think along certain lines—the lines the propagandist believes to be right—before they have sufficient knowledge or experience of life to form any judgment of their own.² That may, or may not,

¹ The bringing of children into politics seems to me merely wicked. It doesn't often happen in England, I hope—but I have seen a little girl put up on a platform to retail the political malice with which she had been stuffed by her elders.

² In this connection I shall venture to quote a passage I wrote some years ago: 'I had occasion to make some inquiries of the particular department of the London County Council that concerns itself with the literature of education; and on my remarking to the official who

be the explanation of what I believe to be a fact; for when I made inquiry from the member of another university as to this alleged lack of intellectual background in the young, I was told that so it was. Certain it is that one-sided presentation of a case—even one-sidedness in the good cause of peace—does not tend to broadening of the mind. And, in addition to the intellectual disadvantage of propagandist instruction, there is its moral disadvantage, its almost inevitable dishonesty. If it does not deal in the lie direct, it will deal, all too often, in the lie by implication and suppression—the suppression of facts against its interest. Hence, whichever way one looks at it, it is not a factor that brings out the best in the young.

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Uniformity of thought on a large scale does not make for intelligence and, for that reason alone, all attempts to impose it should be viewed with a careful suspicion.

was dealing with my queries that I should like to know how teachers in elementary schools treated the War in their classes, there came an exclamation that was almost shocked: "Surely they teach them as little as possible about it!" . . . I do not know to what extent the principle that the young should be kept in ignorance of an all-important experience through which their world had passed was acted on by English educationists; but I certainly have met young people who assured me they heard nothing about the War in their schooldays. The motive which kept them in ignorance was, of course, excellent; but they *were* kept in ignorance of events which have conditioned their lives.' In other words, they were deprived of historical and political background. All teachers, of course, must be guides to their pupils, but guidance is not the same thing as confining to a groove—a process which, as I have said, is sometimes nowadays confused with education.

It is a characteristic of primitive humanity—the tribe thought as one—and humanity developed intellectually as it cast off the shackles of herd-thinking. If the political book club takes hold in England and becomes a permanent institution and its thousands of readers, month by month and year by year, have the same set of ideas presented to them—and accept those ideas in the spirit of the yes-man—the consequence is likely to be a lowering of intellectual quality. Opposition—the contrary idea that would stimulate thought—will hardly be provided in an atmosphere of partisan conviction and emotion. Yet opposition—something to thrust against and try our strength on—is as much a need of our mental, as it is of our bodily, growth. We live by a process of action and reaction, thrust and counterthrust; when it ceases in the body, there is death of the body; in the brain, there is death of the brain. Uniformity of thought—refusal to wrestle with the contrary idea—has already, in certain regions of the world, produced what Dr Inge has described as ‘a Sahara of the higher intellect’; and the same cause can be relied on to produce the same result elsewhere.

No progress in any sphere of life is possible without individual experiment; which will not be undertaken in the sphere intellectual by those who think as a herd. The present-day willingness of large numbers of our people, especially the young, to have their reading selected for them, and accept what amounts to an intellectual dictatorship—that willingness is not a good omen for the future of English thought.

XV. THE CULT OF YOUTH

ONCE a year, in the city of Leeds, there takes place a festival, known as Children's Day, dedicated to pageantry and the sports and amusements of the young. All the schools of the city have their part in the festival which, if the sun shines (as it did when I was there), is a sight worth turning out to see. Several sights, rather, for the programme is lengthy, starting in the morning with a procession of decorated cars and lorries that takes its way through the main streets; in each of the lorries a tableau-group, arranged by a school, in the fashion of a Lord Mayor's Show. The end of the route is in Roundhay Park, where the children and their teachers converge and the afternoon's display takes place; the youth of Leeds in their thousands sit round an arena of level turf while more thousands of their elders crowd on the slopes behind them. There is music, of course, and dancing—country dancing, Greek dancing—by scores of children clad in gay-coloured draperies; there are 'physical jerks' by girls and by boys; and the homage of the assembly to its chosen queen as she appears in the arena with her train of attendants, parades before her subjects and takes her seat on a throne. I do not know by what process of selection the queen of the day is raised to her sovereign dignity, but appearance, I was told, is not the prime qualification—the promoters of the festival disclaim the idea of a beauty competition amongst the young ladies of Leeds. She must, I imagine, be a girl of proven popularity—unless, indeed, they draw her name from a hat!

The idea of this annual festival of youth originated with the local press—the *Yorkshire Evening Post*—but there was, I gather, no need to force it on the boys and girls of Leeds; they took to it at once and, as the day comes round, make their various preparations with enthusiasm. For teachers and others responsible it must mean no little preliminary labour in the shape of rehearsal of the drill and dancing sections and superintendence of costume; the smoothness of the pageant on the day I saw it bore witness to organization.

This annual Children's Day of Leeds is an outcome, and a happy one, of that Cult of the Child which, as soon as the guns had ceased to thunder, swept through Europe like an epidemic and, with more or less ardour, has continued to the present day. All nations, peoples, and languages have been converted to the Cult of the Child: education—school education—is to-day a vast and increasing industry; we spend as never before on the welfare of the young—on its teachers and doctors, on its diet and physical training. There was a day when the young, in the presence of their elders, were expected to speak when they were spoken to, and otherwise be seen and not heard; now the pendulum has swung to the other extreme and we have reached an epoch when the adult is considered unreasonably selfish if he objects to the open-air screeches proceeding from nursery schools.¹
. . . An ideal relationship of the generations must lie

¹ This is no exaggeration. I was recently informed by a credible witness that the presiding genius of a nursery school, when asked, in the interest of her neighbours' work, whether shrieking from the garden could not be moderated, replied with a blank refusal to interfere with 'happy play.'

somewhere between the two extremes; it may be nearly as cruel to sacrifice the adult to the child's pleasure in noise as to sacrifice the child to the quiet and well-being of the adult. And, after all, the working adult has to keep things going while the younger generation grows up!

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One of Nature's devices to save the world from stagnation is to implant in the breast of each generation a certain amount of contempt for the old-fashioned manners and outlook of its immediate predecessors; a contempt which youth, grown older in its turn, will receive from its own sons and daughters. The only difference, in that respect, between young persons of to-day and their parents when young, is in the degree of contempt; the tendency has been encouraged in the youth of to-day, and, for that reason, is occasionally strong. In the years that followed the War the mood of the English people—and not of the English people alone—was one of reaction against it, sometimes of angry reaction; and boys and girls, at an impressionable age, had the wickedness and folly of war rubbed into them. As they knew that the previous generation, their parents included, had approved and taken part in the outburst of madness, the attitude of such youngsters towards their elders was more contemptuous than usual. A headmaster I once met who had served throughout the War and who, in addition to his love of boys, possessed a most valuable sense of humour, told me, with chuckles, that his sixth form, in the course of a frank discussion, had informed him they thought him a fool for 'doing his bit' with the

army. . . . 'What did you do in the Great War, daddy?' The inventor of that classic query could not have foreseen that, a few years on, daddy's offspring might supply their own answer: 'Joined up, like the silly ass he was!'

I do not for a moment suggest that that view is shared by the general run of English boys and girls—if it were so, there would be no recruits for the services; but it is certainly not unusual—especially with those who have come under the influence of pacifist teaching of the superficial type. (It was perhaps more frequent a few years ago, when the War was nearer, than it is in this present year of grace.) And there is nothing abnormal about it; all long wars have been followed by a phase of reaction and revulsion; the intoxication of combat has its 'morning after' as surely as the intoxication of strong drink; and it is one of the tragedies of a war generation that those who come after it see only the folly of its sacrifice. To have given your service and the blood of your best and be told that the offering had better not have been made—that has been the fate of more generations than one! Was there not hooting at Wellington's regiments when they came back victorious from Waterloo?

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The Cult of the Child has not done all that was expected of it; there was a widespread idea in the early days that, by means of the talisman of education, youth would produce a world less given to quarrel than the world mismanaged by its parents. Whether through the fault of its teachers, or the workings of its own

original sin, it shows few signs of doing so at present; but if that particular hope has been falsified, the cult has made for improvement in other directions. In health, above all; the little Londoners who run past my window as they come out of school are cleaner and sturdier than their predecessors—largely, I suppose, because doctors and dentists and nurses keep a watchful eye on the elementary schools. They are better, more sensibly clad than their predecessors; they wear fewer garments in the summer—the fashion that Germany set us is spreading through all classes in England. They get more exercise than the school generations of an earlier day; regularly, when the swimming-baths are open, I see long processions of boys and girls setting out from school for their swim at the municipal baths. I regret to add, however, that I was told recently by an official of a London swimming-bath that although the girls, as long as they remain at school, will come with enthusiasm and thoroughly enjoy the exercise, they will often drop it, or all but drop it, once they start the ‘perming’ of their hair. Since the rubber cap is but a partial protection and the set of the coiffure of more importance than healthful exercise, even those who were once eager swimmers will only bathe when the ‘perm’ has, so to speak, run out—for a day or so before the visit to the hairdresser whereby its wavings are renewed.

The ‘perm,’ fortunately, does not interfere with the now fashionable exercise of hiking; what must interfere with its proper enjoyment is the terrible shoe which fashion, or the will of the manufacturer, inflicts on all but a small minority of the female population of England. The day when a cheap, low-heeled walking-

shoe is placed on the market will be a good day for the Englishwoman's health and well-being; at present, as far as my experience goes, it is impossible to buy such a thing. The cheap shoe is the high-heeled shoe; if you want such a shoe as the hiker ought to wear, you must have it made or go to an expensive shop. The north of England is more sensible in this respect than the south; the girls from Sheffield who take their pleasure at week-ends in the Derbyshire dales are many of them soundly shod; whereas the footwear of the London young women you meet in Surrey makes your own feet ache in sympathy. Incidentally I wish that someone whose word carries weight with the young would suggest to the lass who wears trousers when she tramps that she should not buy them at the counter where her brother buys his. The outlines of the female are not those of the male, and I have walked behind young women whose tightness of trouser was not only indelicate but suggested possibility of split.

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I believe it is the case that serious crime in England has considerably decreased of late years; that, however, if statistics do not lie, is not the case with juvenile wrongdoing. Not, at any rate, in all parts of England, for I have heard juvenile delinquency discussed in a district where it was causing the authorities uneasiness. Perhaps in dealing with the youthful sinner the balance between leniency and penalty has not yet been rightly ascertained; to suggest that, in some cases, it comes down too far on the lenient side is, of course, to invite the wrath of the progressive teacher and the child

psychologist; but all the same, I have heard it suggested, and by persons the reverse of unkindly. A friend of my own, after a visit to a boys' Home Office school, said she wondered if the inmates' unoffending brethren enjoyed as many amenities? while recently I had an amusing half-hour with a woman whose local relationships had afforded her some insight into the working of a similar establishment for girls. Here there seemed to be a minimum of restriction; no supervision during walks abroad; and being allowed out unaccompanied, in some instances at least young pilferers continued to pilfer. They would usually do their hunting in twos and threes, the shopkeeper's attention being distracted by accomplices while the actual pilferer was at work. When, as sometimes happened, cash was stolen from tills, the girls would then go a-shopping; and some ingenious spirits had evolved a system—for some time undetected—whereby possession of their purchases aroused no suspicion in their guardians. They bought string and paper, wrapped up the goods they had annexed without payment, adjourned to a post office and addressed the parcels to themselves; and when the parcels were duly delivered next day, it was explained to authority that they were gifts from affectionate relatives. One of their exploits had a touch of real genius about it; the young persons concerned annexed a siphon from a chemist's counter and, having drunk the contents, brought it back to the shop and received from the chemist the amount of the deposit they were supposed to have left on his property! . . . I know too little about the management of children in general, and juvenile delinquents in particular, to venture any definite opinion on present methods

of dealing with this type of child; but I gathered that my informant—who did know what she was talking about—considered that it sometimes erred on the lenient side. After all, if a child sees her thieving is regarded as excusable by her elders, she will so regard it herself. The enlightened of to-day consider that fear should have no part in a child's upbringing; but fear, like every other human attribute, varies in quality—it is absolute neither for evil nor for good. To terrorize a child is the vilest of sins, but it is another thing to imbue it with intelligent fear of consequence; a capacity for intelligent fear is necessary both to the individual and the race. Few will deny that the race has need of it to-day; and if our ancestor, the caveman, had failed to arouse an intelligent fear in his younger generation, there would shortly have been no younger generation—only cave-bears gnawing the skulls and marrow-bones of an extinct human species that had not the wit to be afraid.

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If I mistake not, the young people of to-day are better companions to their elders than the young of, say, the beginning of the century; I don't mean they are more considerate—possibly they aren't!—but they are often easier to talk to, easier for a stranger to get on with. I was entertained recently, in the absence of his parents, by a boy of school-leaving age who accepted the duty thrust on him without any sign of reluctance or embarrassment and made a most excellent host; I reflected, as we dined, that when I was seventeen or eighteen I might have had difficulty in finding subjects of conversation with one so much senior to myself—but not so

my young man! I don't remember what we talked about, but we talked quite happily; he showed no signs of being bored with me, and I know I was not bored with him!

And that is not the only occasion on which, in the society of boys and girls, I have noticed a lessening in the distance between the young and their elders. Discussing things modern with an Oxford professor, I asked, had he also noticed this lessening and found he was not only aware of it but had an explanation ready; he put it down to the shrinkage in the size of the family. In the one- or two-child middle-class household of to-day, parents and children share each others' daily lives; whereas, in the epoch of the well-filled quiver, the nursery and schoolroom lived apart from the drawing-room, and child associated chiefly with child. In addition, the domestic servant shortage makes for closer contact in the family; the middle-class mother of moderate income will perform many of the offices that were formerly left to a nurse—it is she, for instance, who will take her children for their walk. Because the children are more in the company of their parents than when they were confined to their nursery sphere, they are bound to see more of their parents' friends and acquaintances; thus they grow up accustomed to the society of their elders and take it as a matter of course.

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Education is creating its own problems for the young. The university degree is more frequent than it was, and, being more frequent, no longer has its old value; that is to say, it is no longer a passport to professional

employment, as it was in the days when the word 'university' meant either Oxford or Cambridge. Inevitable, no doubt; in the sphere of education, as elsewhere, abundance is bound to mean cheapness. The glut of graduates, as compared with openings in the intellectual labour market, has long been a problem on the continent of Europe, where higher education has always been cheap; its cheapening here is producing the same consequence—which universities, before many years are over, may have to take into account. Professor Laski, in an article contributed to *Time and Tide*, admits that he is 'deeply disturbed' by the difficulty of finding suitable appointments for the young men and women who have taken their degrees, 'especially if they are of the adventurous type and unwilling to settle down into routine careers, like teaching or the Civil Service.' He instances 'a young chemist with an excellent degree from a northern university who has knocked in vain at all the obvious doors' and 'a girl with a brilliant degree in philosophy who finds nothing open to her but a secretarial post'—for which, incidentally, she would require to learn typing and shorthand. Professor Laski believes that 'there is a real shrinkage in the opportunities open to persons of an academic training unless they have a special qualification, e.g. medicine, or the means to wait. Even with the special qualification, the opportunity may be small. Recently I helped to select a woman medical officer for a municipal maternity home at £300 a year—a temporary post. The entry was almost startlingly large, and the quality of candidates quite obviously first class. None of those whom we rejected had any definite prospects in a month's time; none of them, I



HOLIDAY ENGLAND: BLEA TARN, CONISTON

L.M.S.

believe, could afford to wait much longer than a month for a post.' There has been a phenomenal increase in the last few years in the number of men and women students who have qualified in medicine and joined a profession which—judging by Professor Laski's experience—is getting badly overcrowded.¹ In certain industries and activities there is plenty of work for the young—say, in little office jobs and the running of fool-proof machines; but as regards academic attainment, we appear to be reaching saturation point.² Some day, no doubt, we shall have to face this problem of the educated proletarian; who having cost his parents—or perhaps the State—a considerable sum for his education; and having, himself, spent several good years in hard work for his degree; then finds himself with no particular prospects in a world where degrees are plentiful. Our scholastic machine is engaged, year by year, in turning out young

¹ See Note E. The Overcrowded Medical Profession.

² The Oxford authority, already quoted, threw an interesting side-light on the Burnham scale and its slowing-down effects on entry to the teaching profession—at any rate, entry to particular departments thereof. He told me that he had recently mentioned to a friend of his, headmaster of a well-known public school, that he knew one or two young Oxford men who would be suitable for public school appointments. The headmaster's reply was that he was unlikely to have any vacancies as, thanks to the Burnham scale, schoolmasters nowadays stuck to their jobs like limpets; the elderly man, whose salary has risen with his years, knows that if he leaves he will have to compete for another post with men who are cheaper, because younger; the salary to which his years of teaching entitle him under the Burnham scale is a benefit so long as he remains in work, but a handicap as soon as he loses it. So the tendency of the modern schoolmaster is to stay where he is; he only moves for promotion in the shape of headmastership.

people—more young people—with qualifications that fit them for professional life, but the faster it turns them out, the less likelihood there is that their qualifications will ensure them the career they desire.

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I have sometimes thought that—considering the insecurity in which it lives—our younger generation is admirably cheerful and courageous; even the Youth with a capital Y that takes itself seriously as a factor in Progress does not seem to be troubled by its possible uncertainty of tenure. Perhaps, however, it is less courageous than it seems; it cannot, like its elders, compare the past with the uneasy present, or regret a stability it has never experienced; having been bred in an atmosphere of insecurity, like its primitive ancestors it accepts insecurity as part of the natural order.

XVI. ON DIVISION OF LABOUR AND THE DRIFT TO THE SOUTH

IT was, if I remember aright, Adam Smith who first instructed an admiring world in the advantages of Division of Labour as applied to industry; leaving to posterity the task of discovering that there are certain disadvantages attaching to the process. With its effect upon the human being whose lifework may consist in the shaping of a pinhead or the sticking of a piece of satin on a shoe-heel I am not here concerned; but the doctrine of extreme division of labour has been applied to localities as well as to men—with initial success, no doubt, but sometimes with eventual disaster. . . . There was once an economist—unlike Adam Smith, his name is unknown to us—who was alive to the danger of Adam Smith's doctrine when carried to extremes; hence his advice against the putting of all eggs in one basket. There are towns and districts in the north of England which would have suffered less from the effects of slump had they paid more heed to the teaching of that early economist.

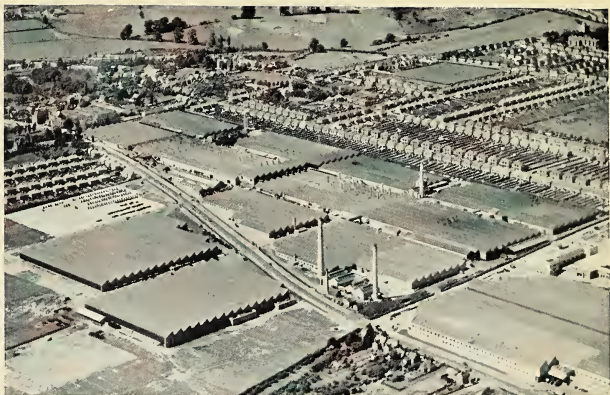
To take one instance; the Tyneside town of Jarrow. Where, directly or indirectly, and for decade after decade, the majority of its citizens obtained their livelihood from the one source of Palmer's Yard. Palmer's, while it lasted, was the mainspring of Jarrow's existence; the tradesmen in the town made their livelihood by catering for its shipwrights and steelworkers. The traces of its

former supremacy are still visible; the Palmer Memorial Hospital is not the only institution that bears the name of the founders of the business; and you may read on a local War Memorial that it was raised by the directors and shareholders of Palmer's Shipbuilding and Iron Company 'to record their appreciation of the patriotism of 1,543 men from their Jarrow and Hebburn works in joining His Majesty's Forces in the Great War.' In honour of the dead whose names are there graven, the inscription ends with a quotation from Pericles:

So they gave their bodies to the Commonwealth and received each for his memory praise that will never die, and with it the noblest sepulchre—not the earth wherein their bones are laid but a place in the minds of men.

Somehow Pericles read strangely in that poor, shabby Jarrow—giving an added touch of irony to the suggestion that the memory of those who lost their lives in war will be held in perpetual honour. One generation cannot bind another to reverence; and the brute fact is, it is only here and there, where men die dramatically—and find an inspired chronicler to write of them—that the manner of their dying is remembered by those who come after.

When I visited Jarrow in the depth of its worklessness it was not for the first time; I knew the Tyneside well in my younger days, when all along the river you were never out of hearing of the clang, clang, clang, of hammers from the shipyards. At the best of times—the busiest and most prosperous—Jarrow was not an attractive place for the stranger; its streets had been built in response to the industrial needs of the nineteenth century and were as dreary and grubby-looking



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as most of the streets that were built at that period, for that purpose. But when I first knew it there was bustle of activity in those dreary, grubby streets; men going about their work, women going about their shopping, the baker and the grocer busy with their customers; a squalid town, like so many in the north, but alive!

On my last visit I was taken to see an exhibit in urban lifelessness; a street which once had been a shopping centre of the town, tenanted by bakers and grocers and drapers, and where now almost every trader had despaired and put up his shutters. It reminded me of some deserted town in the war zone; there were back streets in Amiens that looked much like that when I saw them shortly after the Armistice. Between thirty and forty, I think, was the number of shops that had closed in that one little street; their shutters the outward and visible sign of broken homes and hopes. Jarrow on the dole had to stint its daily purchases; the closing down of Palmer's meant disaster to more than the men who worked at Palmer's.

There has, of course, been a drift from the town, a drift that mainly turns southward. Inevitably it is chiefly the younger who have left—men without marriage ties, and girls. There is an organization which trains Jarrow girls for domestic service and which, needless to say, has no difficulty in finding them places; I heard—and can well believe it—that there is always a waiting list of would-be employers.¹

¹ As things are at time of writing, young people—boys and girls—if they will migrate from their workless district, have seldom any difficulty in finding employment; juvenile labour is everywhere in

It may be that Jarrow has now turned the corner; since I looked on that street of dead-and-gone shops, hope has come to the town in the shape of a new steel industry. Some among its citizens must be earning their wage instead of drawing their dole—and it may be that some among the dead-and-gone shops have revived and taken down their shutters. But even if the worst should be over and a measure of prosperity ahead of her citizens, Jarrow will still be an object lesson on the unwisdom of too much division of labour. All her economic life was bound up with one form of industry; she had no second trade, no agriculture to fall back on. The towns that suffered least in the bad days of slump were those that did not put all their eggs in one basket but made their living out of many and various industries. I remember, in those bad days, being told in Birmingham that unemployment was not so general as in many other districts because Birmingham carried on so many different trades; and I have been told the same

demand. In one busy district of Yorkshire I was told that boys and girls were almost unobtainable—all the local youngsters were employed. What often prevents migration, however, is the lack of cheap lodging in a district that has work to offer; a juvenile wage which would be good pay if the recipient were living at home and sharing with his family might be entirely swallowed elsewhere by a weekly charge for board and lodging. At Wills' Tobacco Factory, where wages are good as well as steady, a girl who has just left school will begin, if I remember rightly, at 17s. 6d. a week; even if she pays her keep into the household purse, such a wage-earner will certainly have something left for pocket-money. This might not be the case if a charge for lodging in Cardiff or London were added to the charge for board—and not all beginning wages are up to the prosperous tobacco standard.

thing by business men in Leeds—which calls itself the city of a hundred and one industries.

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We have thought so long of the north as industrial England that the southward movement of the factory at first seemed almost unnatural; yet there was a time when industry flourished in the south, when iron was wrought where now is open country and the armament of England forged in the Weald of Sussex. Hammer ponds are still there to remind us of the smiths whose fires were kindled not with coal but with charcoal from the forest that once covered the Weald, and who beat on their anvils the armour worn at Cressy and Agincourt and Flodden.

Despite general improvement in the trade of the country, there are regions in the north—more especially in Durham—where the getting of coal is as dead as the burning of charcoal; the pits that have shut down will never reopen—they have ceased to be a paying proposition. A Roman Catholic priest—the good beggar I spoke of in an earlier chapter—told me the number of his flock was decreasing by migration, and the same thing is happening elsewhere. Because trade has gone southward, migration for the most part follows it; Corby, in the midlands, is perhaps the most striking instance of this southward trend, for in Corby is established a complete Scottish colony which, in organized trek, has followed its works from the Clyde. The industrial south is a reality. There are mills in Lancashire and industrial Cumberland with no pennon of smoke from their chimneys; but factory after factory is

built outside London, on the Great West Road, and the dreaming spires of Oxford University are neighboured by the Morris motor-works. Liverpool, of old, held pride of place for Atlantic passenger traffic; now Atlantic liners sailing from the Solent outnumber those sailing from the Mersey; Southampton has outstripped Liverpool.¹

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Evidence of the recent growth of Southampton is the transformation of a railway station that used to be known as Southampton West into a Southampton Central. For the change is more than nominal; it is fully justified by the spread of the town towards the upper reaches of Southampton Water. The old West Station was an unimposing, rather countrified affair, with a long, unsheltered platform, separated only by a fence from the road beyond; and as the train pulled up, you had a view to look at—Southampton Water, an arm of the sea, and the green on the New Forest side. There was a time in my life when I travelled, now and then, from London to Bournemouth, and when that happened, I used to look forward to Southampton West for the first glimpse of salt water—and hope that the tide would be up. To-day, in the station that was West and is Central, it makes no difference if the tide be up or no; Southampton Water is invisible. Not only because the station itself is of greater extent but because Southampton Water has receded; the city, in need of more land for its industries, has reclaimed a large tract of the marshy foreshore and erected upon it both quays and factories which

¹ See Note F. The Drift to the South.

effectively shut out the view. Evidently more factories are expected and desired, for I noticed advertisements pointing out the many advantages of the site, its convenient nearness alike to railway and to quay. In her industries, as well as in her shipping, Southampton would seem to be on the upgrade.

As to shipping, though London and Liverpool exceed her in respect of the total tonnage that enters their ports, Southampton is now the first port in the kingdom for passenger traffic; thirty-seven per cent of the ocean-going travellers of the country pass through Southampton Docks—and this without counting the cross-Channel voyagers whose yearly tale is something like a quarter of a million. The vessels that deal with this traffic of the seas vary in size from the giant *Queen Mary* to the nightly boats that ply to Jersey and Havre; the Royal Mail Steam Packet, the Cunard-White Star, the United States line, the Union-Castle, the Canadian Pacific—these are some of the lines that sail from Southampton Docks. No less than seven steamship companies maintain a regular service to New York; in summer there are almost daily sailings to America.¹

Behind Southampton is a history of ups and downs; few towns in England can have known so many fluctuations in prosperity. When Kings of England were Dukes of Normandy her trade with the French coast flourished and, as in the war of a later date, she was a port of embarkation for the wars of the Plantagenets—which doubtless brought grist to her mill. The discovery of

¹ The shipping entering Southampton Docks has of late amounted to over eighteen million tons a year. In 1845, shortly after the opening of the first dock, it was 158,000 tons.

America hit her hard; commerce turned in another direction and, as Bristol rose to prosperity, so the trade of the Solent declined. There is a pathetic story that when she was required, in the name of Queen Elizabeth, to furnish two or three ships for service against the Armada, the mayor protested that the town had not the wherewithal, either in vessels or men. Refugees from the religious strife of the Continent settled in the town and introduced the art of cloth-making, and their industry did something to induce prosperity; but, such as it was, it was of brief duration for there is mention, in the days of Charles the Second, of a 'poor and depopulated' Southampton. In the eighteenth century it went through a different experience—a fashionable phase. Frederick Prince of Wales—the nonentity, Fred,

Who was alive and is dead

—discovered it as a health resort; and, being Prince of Wales as well as nonentity, drew the modish world to Southampton, which thereupon took upon itself the character of watering-place. It built itself a theatre and laid down pavement; it took to sea-bathing, put lamps in its streets and discovered a chalybeate spring. Southampton, one of its citizens insisted, 'is not a mercantile town, but depends principally for its support on the company who resort there for health and pleasure.' This watering-place phase was not of very long duration; by the early years of the nineteenth century fashion had drifted in other directions; but in the older quarters of the town there are still terraces that suggest a kinship with Leamington and Tunbridge Wells. Cumberland Place, for instance, its verandaed windows

overlooking a wide space of green, and some of the demure little houses that must once have faced the water, until dock walls raised their dreary height. This depriving of pleasant little houses of their view is a frequent minor tragedy of seaports and the seaside in general.

I believe certain vandals among the Southampton city fathers once proposed the removal of the ancient Bar, on the ground that it held up the trams; obviously the proposal was defeated, since the Bar still stands in its ancient dignity, but for the convenience of traffic the street frontage on one side has been set back, providing an alternative and wider thoroughfare than that which runs through the archway of the Bar. The two modern buildings whereof Southampton boasts are its Civic Centre—still in course of erection—and the largest dry dock in the world; capable of accommodating the *Queen Mary* and, if necessary, ships even larger than the giant Cunarder; the builders of the dock have looked ahead to the day of the hundred-thousand tonner. Not all the ocean traffic from the Solent is civilian. As in the days of the Normans and Plantagenets, Southampton is still our chief military port, and by way of the Solent the army comes and goes. It is from Southampton that the troopship sails for the Mediterranean and the East; it is at Southampton that the regiment lands when the term of foreign service is over.

The raising of the grandiose Civic Centre betokens, I imagine, Southampton's confidence in her own future and the continued drift of industry and commerce to the south. No city that had doubts of the years ahead would commit itself to the erection of so vast a building, or rather, group of buildings. The three great blocks

already completed contain the Municipal Offices, the Law Courts, and the Guildhall—its main hall furnished with a stage and balcony which can seat an audience of over two thousand. Not yet completed is the fourth section which is to house, in addition to the Public Library, an Art Gallery, and a School of Arts and Crafts. Civic Centre, without doubt, is the name for this assemblage of buildings. An imposing classic structure faced in Portland stone; and, thanks to the clearance of surrounding property, seen as it should be seen!

From that Central Station, which used to be the West, the train to Bournemouth took me through a country I have known all my life; and before I arrived at Bournemouth Central, I was thinking with gratitude of William, the Norman Conqueror. For William the Conqueror, as I learned in my childhood, for his own selfish pleasure in the hunting of the deer, razed Saxon villages and drove out their inhabitants over a wide stretch of Hampshire. The New Forest, which he so created, still exists and, for the most part, in beauty; because William made it a royal domain, to-day it is a national heritage. But for his ruthless pleasure in the chase, it is likely enough that there would be no vestige of the old woods left, and what are now the loveliest tracts of English forest would be spotted by the democratic bungalow. As it is, our national heritage of wood and heath still amounts to over sixty thousand acres; if all William's chase had come down without encroachment, it would amount to nearly three times as much; but the area, by degrees, was in great part disafforested. Successors to the hunt that once rode in William's train are the cars and motor coaches that career along its high-



SOUTHAMPTON

Above—Hubert Walker Avenue Docks Extension. Southern Railway.
Below—Soldiers landing from a troopship. Southern Newspapers Ltd.

ways, and I remember, some years ago, an outcry over the killing and maiming of forest ponies by speed-merchants; but main roads are not many and the distances between them wide, so the forest may still be a holiday ground for those who take pleasure in solitude.

As I have said, I knew the district well; the forest itself and the coastline to the south and west; Lymington, Christchurch, Bournemouth, Poole, and Swanage. When I first knew that coastline, between Bournemouth and Christchurch, lying to the east, was a gap of about five miles; between Bournemouth and Poole, which lies to the west, was another five-mile distance. Now the train, as it runs between Christchurch and Bournemouth, gives you never a sight of a gap. Christchurch and Pokesdown and Boscombe and Bournemouth have their separate stations, and I suppose their municipal authorities know where the one begins and the other leaves off; but, for all practical purposes, they are just five miles of the ribbon development that looks like spreading round the whole southern coast—perhaps round the coast of all England. Gone, too—I believe to its whole extent—is the gap between Bournemouth and Poole, making ten long miles of ribbon! (Do the population-alarmists, I wonder, ever sit down and imagine an England encircled with villas and bungalows and blocks of flats from Berwick round to Solway Firth?)

So far as I know, there is nothing on the Hampshire coast that approaches the repulsiveness of Peacehaven—that blot on the decent face of England; my point is merely that a long stretch of coast has become completely urbanized. Christchurch Priory was one of the lovely sights of England in the days when I used to gather

kingcups in the Avon meadows; Christchurch Priory to-day is half-hidden from the train by a huddle of common little houses. Where once was heather on that Hampshire coast, there are now long rows of shops; and all too many of the pinewoods I played in as a child are represented by a tree or two left standing in the garden of somebody's villa. Expansion on this scale is not a matter of birth-rate; there must have been a stream of immigration. I know of no holiday district in the north which has expanded at the same rapid rate as the Sussex coast around Brighton and the Hampshire coast around Bournemouth; as industry moves south, so does the holidaymaker.

Till about a century and a quarter ago there was no such place as Bournemouth; most of the country around was scantily populated when the foundations of the town were laid by a gentleman with a taste for solitude, who, liking the neighbourhood of pine and heath, built himself a house where the Bourne runs into the sea—on the site, perhaps, where the town's pavilion stands to-day. (In my childhood I once met a very old lady who remembered that solitary house.) In the year 1851 there were still under seven hundred inhabitants; now, exclusive of the holiday contingent, they number something like a hundred and thirty thousand. . . . The mushroom development of the South coast is no doubt satisfactory to those who have housing sites to sell: but those who remember that once it was beautiful may feel less pleasure in the prosperous spread of brick and concrete.

XVII. ODDS AND ENDS: THE RESTAURANT
WOMAN; TOTALITARIAN FOOD; THE
AMATEUR EVANGELIST; MODERN ENGLAND
UNMODERNIZED

FOUR or five years ago an overseas cousin of mine paid a few weeks' visit to London—familiar enough in his younger days but unseen for thirty years and more. A day or two after his arrival we lunched together at a restaurant in the neighbourhood of Piccadilly Circus, the type of restaurant where they give you a table d'hôte lunch for three shillings or so. The place was crowded, the waiters busy; every table in the room had its occupants and, as usually happens at that time of day, in that part of London, the majority of the occupants were women. I saw my cousin look round the room with an interest that had in it something of puzzlement; and when the waiter had gone off with the order, he leaned across the table and asked curiously:

'Tell me, who are all these women? Where do they come from?'

For a moment the question took me aback; it was so plainly prompted by astonishment at what he saw, yet what cause for astonishment could there be in so very commonplace a sight—a roomful of middle-class women enjoying a three-shilling lunch? And then I remembered my companion's London was a London of forty years gone—of the eighteen-nineties—when life was more domestic, more stay-at-home, than it is in the nineteen-thirties. In the London of his youth the middle-class

woman would lunch at her own house, except on the occasions when she lunched at the house of a friend; the restaurant that caters for her taste and purse was an institution of the future. Women in business, it is true, could not take all their meals at home; but that was a matter of necessity and they lunched on snacks at teashops—which had not yet expanded into something more than teashops.

I explained to my cousin the change in our London habits; told him that some of these women had probably come in from the suburbs for a *matinée* and that others were sandwiching a restaurant meal between two bouts of shopping. In his day, of course, people shopped and went to *matinées*, but there was not our continual inflow and outflow between the residential quarters and the central shopping area. And our monstrous city was not only smaller but more localized; the ordinary shopper in Oxford Street or Holborn was someone who lived not far from central London. When there was no station at Piccadilly Circus, because the tube system had yet to be excavated; when the horse-bus plodded slowly from Wimbledon or Hampstead or Shepherd's Bush; it was only now and then, for some special need, that the middle-class woman who dwelt in those suburbs would make what was something like a journey to the West End shops. With every increase in transport facilities—every new line of coaches or thrust of tube—there has come an increase in the number of women who converge on the West End during shopping hours and who therefore require to be fed—the lunching-out habit growing the more readily by reason of the servant shortage. And in response to demand, supply is forth-

coming; restaurants cater for the shopping type of customer, teashops add more substantial items to their menus—and the crowd of women who astonished my cousin sit down to their three-shilling lunch.

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Taken all round, we are a nation of monotonous feeders. The modern tendency to uniformity does not only express itself in mass-produced boots and mass-produced ideas; it is also increasingly evident in the sphere of nourishment. One of the factors in food-uniformity is the ubiquitous multiple shop which distributes its wares from one end of England to the other; and for some reason I am not economist enough to understand, the mass-produced article supplied by multiplicity seems able to supplant any individual home-grown product, however excellent and cheap. Recently, in the commercial hotel of a small northern town, I asked for a bread-and-cheese lunch—asked for it with anticipation of good things, since Wensleydale was only a few miles distant from my hostelry. What arrived, however, was not even English cheese but triangular morsels wrapped in silver paper whose place of manufacture was Switzerland. I have no contempt for the products of Switzerland, but I dislike the morsel-and-silver-paper habit; and, even at its best, Gruyère should not be offered in the country of a fine English cheese. So I struck at the morsels and demanded cheese I could cut—and wasn't any Wensleydale obtainable? The landlady explained she kept nothing but the morsels but would send someone out and see what could be done at the grocer's. At the mention of Wensleydale she shook

her head doubtfully; she didn't think any one in the town sold that! And apparently they didn't; what came back, after search on the part of her envoy, was a slab of 'imported,' dull as to flavour and tallowy as to consistency. Yet the very next day, at a wayside inn, my glass of beer was accompanied by a cheese of surpassing excellence! So excellent was it that I asked its name and was told, they didn't think it had one. 'It's just what we make round here.' You can still buy such cheese in Lancashire and Yorkshire for as little as sevenpence and eightpence a pound; but the factory articles—the cheeses of tallowy consistency—are pushing their way in the very districts that produce them. Because, apparently, our people like them just as well, if not better—and the shops, no doubt, find it more convenient to deal in them. As the book club works for totalitarian brains, so the multiple shop works for totalitarian palates.

In London, naturally, it is possible to get variety of diet and get it at no great expense, but, taken as a whole, its restaurant food becomes yearly more mass-produced and uniform; judging by the popularity of the establishments which serve the same meal to their troops of customers, middle-class Londoners have little individual taste in the edible—what pleases one pleases all! In food, as in everything else, mass-production makes for cheapness and the restaurant that serves hundreds of portions of the same dish can, in a sense, give better value for the customer's money than the restaurant that caters on a more individual scale; and of this substantial economic advantage the Londoner seems fully aware. The moderate-priced, moderate-sized restaurant that does

not sell cakes and mingle teas and morning coffees with its lunches and dinners is not, I think, so numerous as it was—certainly not, in proportion to London's population. For those who prefer an individual meal, it is more than ever necessary to go to the foreigner—and the foreigner who caters for foreigners, not to him who has been corrupted by too much English custom!

While on this subject of the uniformity of food—why, I wonder, is brown sugar eschewed by the caterers for English hotels? we are constantly told by the medical profession that it is more desirable, from the health point of view, than white. A good many people prefer it in their coffee and (if they are not Scottish) with their porridge; but every hotel-keeper in England would seem to have made up his mind that it shall not appear on his table. White in lumps and white in castors—but from Berwick bounds to the shores of the Channel, never a spoonful of brown! Perhaps it is considered vulgar? or is the objection economic? White sugar in castors pours sparingly through holes and, when the holes are obstructed, merely trickles; whereas brown sugar, served with a spoon, can be taken in generous helpings. This seems a possible explanation of the nation-wide hotel taboo.

One of the occasional nuisances of English travel is the variation of public-house closing time; in the one instance where uniformity would be really advantageous, we permit the inconvenient difference. I started out early one morning for a tramp in the Yorkshire dales and by half-past two I should have been hungry, if a thirst engendered by heat and gradient had not been too insistent for hunger. I had quickened my pace for the

last mile or so, knowing, by my map, that a place of refreshment was ahead and counting on beer if I arrived before the hour of three; but when I entered hopefully at twenty to three, I discovered that beer, in that district of Yorkshire, was forbidden after half-past two. All that the landlord could offer me, to slake my thirst, was a gaseous beverage which its makers sold as lemonade. . . . I reflected, as I drank it, on the artificial sins created by our lawmakers: there is something really crackbrained in the idea that, if I stand to the right of a certain boundary line, I may be served with beer till the clock strikes three; and if I stand to the left of that boundary line and am served with beer, the police will take notice of the fact, if the clock has struck half-past two. As hours of closing must be enforced, it would be kinder to the thirsty wayfarer if they were arranged on a uniform basis.¹

One more note before leaving the subject of food and drink. The system of payment by instalments has spread to the lollipop trade; whether widely spread I do not know, but it has certainly made a beginning. I have been in at least one district where boxes of sweets can be purchased by weekly instalments of a penny or twopence; the eventual and desirable results of these

¹ A piece of legislation which must suggest insanity to the foreign visitor is that which permits the opening of a shop on early-closing day, and therefore the employment of a shop-assistant; which permits that assistant to serve you with an evening paper, yet forbids him to stretch out his hand and purvey you a packet of envelopes. To the intelligent foreigner it will certainly seem that if the assistant is entitled to a holiday, he shouldn't be there in the shop; but as he is there, and has not got a holiday, what can it matter whether he sells newspapers or envelopes?

payments are exhibited temptingly in the window of the sweetshop concerned—as the hire-purchase furniture establishments exhibit their dining-room suites. This box for twelve penny payments, that for twelve two-penny! . . . If some poor monkey cannot keep up the payments from its meagre pocket-money, what happens, I wonder, to those already made? Are they returned or confiscate to the shopkeeper? I can hardly think the latter—no human being could be so cruel! But if it should be so, someone ought to call from the police station and make a few unpleasant remarks.

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The practice of churchgoing has declined steeply since the days of my youth, but England is still a country of the street-corner preacher, the amateur who calls to God; in no European country known to me will you meet him with the same frequency. The Church of Rome has always discouraged unauthorized guidance of souls, while in matters religious, as in all things else, Germany has usually preferred the disciplined formation. True the Salvation Army has a worldwide footing and goes out into the highways and hedges with its message; but the Salvation Army is an organized body and cannot be classed as amateur.

It was in one of the smaller towns of the north that I came across a band of these amateur saviours of souls. I noticed, one evening, an announcement pasted up in a window to the effect that certain boy preachers were about to visit the town; they were holding their meetings on a Saturday and Sunday, mostly in the open air but on one occasion indoors. As the weather was chilly I

decided for the indoor occasion and on Sunday evening found my way, with some difficulty, to the hall in which the service was held. This was an upper room that must once, I think, have been a loft; it was reached by a ladder-like staircase, had a platform at one end, and was otherwise furnished with benches. When I arrived the benches were well filled; I believe the seat found for me was the last unoccupied; it was clear the boy preachers were a draw. There were four or five lads on the platform, but only two of them addressed us that night; one, a sturdy fellow who looked about eighteen, the other slighter and younger—one of my neighbours in the congregation told me he was still at school. His companions, she added, were all of them working lads, employed in a Lancashire mill.

It was a long service. Hymn and prayer to begin with; a sermon (comparatively short) from the sturdy lad; more hymns and a second sermon—this time delivered by the schoolboy. There was no nervousness about him; he was fluent, and as earnest as fluent. He had been converted, washed in the Blood of the Lamb; because he knew what it meant, he called us also to conversion. For that was the essential; whatever we might think, it wasn't enough to lead a decent life, to be honest in your dealings and do no wilful harm to your neighbours. You must know yourself powerless to save yourself, you must realize your sin, you must come to Jesus to be cleansed of the stain. Through the Blood of Jesus—only through His Blood! . . .

It was the evangelistic sermon at its simplest, sometimes at its crudest; but in spite of its length—and it was very long—it held its audience throughout. Again

and again the boy said the same thing in practically the same words, but his listeners did not find the repetition wearisome; there was none of the half-unconscious coughing that betokens a straying of attention. And at the end of the address, when the preacher appealed directly for converts—wasn't there any one who had heard the call and would give himself to Christ from that night?—there arose from the benches that mingling of exclamation and prayer wherein a revivalist meeting expresses its religious emotion. For the most part there was murmuring, more or less inaudible; now and again an ejaculation—'Hallelujah!' or 'Lord Jesus!' While the preacher on the platform—his fellows joining in—repeated the summons to Christ. . . . My own tradition of worship is not evangelical and the boy's crude discourse had in no wise moved me; but what did move me was the look of devotion on some of the faces around.

Faith would seem to be as much a constituent of the human mind as salt is a constituent of the human body; it is not abolished because cut off from one of its sources of inspiration—instinctively it turns to another. There are Englishmen to-day who see Christianity as ancient superstition but who believe religiously, and sometimes fanatically, in their own political creed of Democracy, say, or Internationalism! I remember, in a dilapidated Russian church, seeing an old man kneel before a statue and bow his head till it touched the ground—bow it again and again. And I remember thinking that here was the physical, material counterpart of the adoring attitude towards the Soviet State of those who no longer bowed to saints. I should not like to assert that the boy evangelists I heard that night have much of value to

give to the world; still they spoke in sincerity and most impartial persons—even those to whom Christianity means nothing—would probably admit that they are better employed in preaching religion than politics. Their religion, whatever its crudities of expression, had in it this of essential wisdom: it taught that a man's duty is to repent of his own sins—a process that leads to amendment. Whereas one of the first principles of political oratory is to ignore your own sins and denounce those of others—which it is not in your power to amend! A little more of the religious outlook—under any guise—and a little less of the political might be of advantage to England.

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There is a modern England that has not been modernized: for which many, perhaps most, of us are grateful—even those whose idea of holiday pleasure is sixty miles an hour on a straight arterial road.

I walked through such an England one day last summer, where are traces of the Roman, and older than the Roman; I have no intention of saying where it lies, lest some seeker of an 'unspoilt England' discover it, and some county authority proceed to drive roads through the woods where I lost myself—woods undefiled by urban litter. There I spent an afternoon without sight or sound of man or his works—except works untouched for a thousand years and more; and when at last I came out of the woods, below me was a miniature valley, with a stream to it, worth going many miles to see. There is still such unsought loveliness in England; just as there are cottages like that at which I called for direc-

tion and was asked in to tea as a guest. Where I was served with jam of my hostess' making, and heard the story of the local gamekeeper who would eat no dinner on the day of a shoot, so grieved was he for the birds that had fed from his hand!

And there are still such good inns in remoter England as that to which I returned the same evening; they want finding, no doubt, but when found they are well worth the trouble. Inns of long standing but with nothing of 'Ye Olde' about them; with a bill of fare that does not imitate a menu; with a waiter, also of long standing, who serves you with home-grown raspberries, not fruit salad purveyed from a tin—and who, dinner over, sets your coffee in a garden as English as the house it adorns. . . . And around you a heritage bequeathed by an England of the past but which, likely enough, we of this generation shall not hand on to our successors—so many like heirlooms are already destroyed or defaced. A village whose life has been of many hundred years but where change has been gradual, a matter of growth; where housing, of whatever style or century, has hitherto been built of local material; where the church was raised to the glory of God in the unlettered days when all over England lived men who were artists in stone. And, until the aeroplane supersedes the car, a village too remote from London to attract the week-end and set him to the building of his bungalows.

From which fate let us pray it may be preserved until the English race of to-day or to-morrow recovers the talent of its unlettered fathers—the sense of proportion as applied to wall and roof and of rightness in the use of brick and stone.

NOTES

Chapter III—Note A : The Forestry Commission

'These noble vanishing woodlands (in the neighbourhood of Silchester) the Forestry Commission is replacing with its settlements of militarized conifers, particularly on the wild heaths and commons in the region of Aldermaston, Padworth, and Burghfield. On Mortimer Common, for instance, these dwarf spruces, all drawn up in line one row behind another, make a dead sea of sombre green round the two fine bowl barrows that stand thereon, soon to be shut out from view by these lifeless, uniform plantations. The Roman name survives in villages like Stratfield Mortimer, Stratfield Saye, and Stratfield Turgis. But the Roman spirit has been re-incarnated in the uprising of these funereal and standardized woodlands, which all beasts and birds, being of nature, avoid. They seem the disciplined ghosts of the old legions that marched into Silchester by the straight roads that met the four gates that faced the four cardinal points of the compass.'—*From Genius of England* by H. J. MASSINGHAM.

Chapter VI—Note B : The Increase of Callousness

As an example of present-day callousness the following: Shortly after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, I saw in the press a letter from an Englishman dealing with atrocities said to have been committed in a certain district by the side with which he was in sympathy. He had recently come from the district in question and wrote to contradict the reports of cruelty and massacre. There had been, he admitted, a certain amount of killing, sometimes by the gangster method

of taking the victim for a ride—but the number so disposed of had not amounted to more than five hundred, and there had been, he said, no atrocities. In my youth that letter would have shocked most of those who read it, because the killing of five hundred people in cold blood would have been considered an atrocity; but so far as I know (being published yesterday) it created no particular stir. Apparently the cold-blooded killing of helpless people who are not on your side is, within limits, considered permissible. No doubt the practice can be overdone, but when it is only a case of a few hundred casualties, no real objection can be raised. That seems to be the modern view.

Chapter VIII—Note C: The National Trust and Great Estates

In this democratic age no government would risk the accusation of subsidizing the rich; at the same time there can be little doubt that if the one and only consideration were the upkeep of historic buildings and preservation of the beauty of England, the state would do well to take it. As a general rule the best guardians of a house will be those who have inherited a love for it. But although the State is not likely to intervene to prevent the break-up of historic estates, the National Trust is making some efforts to that end—stepping in where the State fears to tread. The National Trust does not aim at the turning of mansions into museums but it does believe that there are 'historic houses of such outstanding importance that they, their gardens and collections, should be guaranteed, for the sake of posterity, against possible desecration or ultimate demolition.'¹ As for the method of guarantee proposed, the Trust has adopted the aforementioned idea of turning the owner into caretaker. It should be pointed out,

¹ The quotation is from an article by Lord Zetland in the *Sunday Times* of August 29, 1937.

however, that this is not a trick to evade taxation; the owner, before he retires from his ownership and the Trust takes over, will have to pay heavily to keep his property in being. Property, whether held by a trust or by private persons, needs to have money spent on it; wages must be paid, the cost of repairs must be met; hence the owner-caretaker will have 'to provide an endowment for the maintenance in perpetuity of the house, its collections and its grounds, while retaining the right for himself and his heirs to inhabit it.' It is obvious that the endowment of such houses and estates will mean the provision of large capital sums—which some owners will be unable and others unwilling to raise. Once raised, however, it will not be whittled away by death duties; though the property will be subject to ordinary taxation, it will not be subject to those. If it be objected that the nation will be mulcted of its former asset of recurring death duties, the National Trust has the right to reply that the unpaid duties do not go into private pockets—and that they are the price the nation pays for a heritage of beauty, an epitome of history which, once it is destroyed for immediate gain, could never be restored to our possession. A vital part of the scheme is that the public shall have access, on certain days and at a small charge, to houses preserved by the Trust. Pride of possession—family pride—may in some cases be an obstacle to the scheme; but pride of possession is far less general than it was, and there must be a good many landowners to-day who, whatever personal sacrifice they make, see little prospect of handing on their heritage intact. Given immunity from war or revolution, such men would be more sure as tenants of the Trust than in their present position as owners of estates which are liable to be thrown on the market by an increase of taxation or a swift succession of deaths. Should a family die out, or no longer be able and willing to remain in charge, then the Trust would be at liberty to find its own tenants and caretakers for the property under its guardianship.

That, roughly, is the scheme for the preservation of ancestral 'white elephants' that the National Trust has put forward. Time will show whether it is workable; one of the snags would seem to be that, in many cases, the initial endowment will be more than a hard-up owner can manage to lay hands on.

Chapter XIII—Note D : The Growth of London

In *The Times* of February 3, 1938, is a report of the evidence given by Mr Humbert Wolfe, Principal Assistant-Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, to the Royal Commission on the Geographical Distribution of the Industrial Population. It was stated by Mr Wolfe that 'the most striking feature of the survey was the remarkable expansion in the insured population in the London and Home Counties area. In July 1923, this area included just over 22 per cent of the total insured population, compared with 26 per cent in July 1937. The percentage increase in the total number of insured persons between July 1923 and July 1937, 42.7 per cent, was nearly double the average for Great Britain. . . . The marked expansion in London and the Home Counties was due primarily to two factors. The area had not included any substantial part of the industries which had been most subject to acute depression, and it included most of the industries in which there had been expansion in recent years.'

Chapter XV—Note E : The Overcrowded Medical Profession

In a letter to the *Sunday Times* of February 6, 1938, Mr Nunn May, the secretary of the National Union of Students, gave figures showing the increase, of recent years, in the number of medical students at the various British universities. The figures compared were those of 1928 and 1935; in the former year the total of students at all the universities of Great

Britain was 44,309, and of these 8,387—a percentage of 18·9—were studying medicine. Seven years later, in 1935, the total number of university students had gone up to 50,529; so also had the number of medicals—12,923—a percentage of 25·6. And, having given his figures, Mr Nunn May asked pertinently: 'Why so large a proportion of students are training for medicine? Are they justified, and can the number of entrants to the profession be increased at this rate indefinitely?' The answer is obviously in the negative. Two other items of information from the same pen are: that between 1900 and 1935 the number of university students increased from twenty thousand odd to fifty thousand odd; and that in the last few years, since 1930, there has been a drop in the number of women students. There has, however, been no drop in the number of women studying medicine; on the contrary, they increased from 1,108 in 1928 to 1,747 in 1935.

Chapter XVI—Note F : The Drift to the South

'Discussing the social and industrial consequences of the concentration of industries in large towns or in particular areas, Mr Wolfe pointed out that the alteration of the relative importance of the north and south was due to the decline of the heavy industries and those producing largely for export, and to the fact that the industries in which expansion had been greatest were mainly engaged in producing for the home market, and had thus tended to be located in close proximity to the immense market offered by London. From the point of view of labour supply, there were advantages afforded by the existence of a considerable body of workmen of varied types of skill and occupation; from the point of view of production, greater facilities were afforded for the advancement and pooling of technical knowledge: and from the point of view of sales there was the advantage of considerable sales close at hand.

'On the other hand, the establishment of industries in new and undeveloped areas . . . involved expenditure for the provision of roads, houses, schools, and similar services at a time when such services . . . had to be maintained in the older industrial areas. At the same time the decline of industrial activity made the older industrial areas less and less able to support the necessary services for the maintenance of their communities. If in the future there was a decline in the population of the country, the cost to the community of the duplication of services would become increasingly burdensome.

'Again, where migration had taken place from the older industrial areas, it was in the main the more vigorous sections of the population which had tended to leave. . . . Migration also tended to lessen the chance of attracting new industries to the depressed areas by reducing the size of what was one of their chief economic assets—an experienced industrial population.'—*The Times*, February 3, 1937, Mr Humbert Wolfe's evidence to the Royal Commission on the Geographical Distribution of the Industrial Population.

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